THE THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
OF HERMANN HESSE'S NOVELS

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PREFACE

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INTRODUCTION

Hermann Hesse with his disdain for academic pomposity and pedantry would probably have winced to see the title of this dissertation. Accordingly out of reverence to his memory and for clarity about what follows it should be explained at the beginning what the aim of this work is and what its justification.

Hesse's most memorable and honored work is his fiction and poetry though there is a considerable corpus of literary criticism and essays on various topics. The present study will concern itself with ten important novels. Specifically it undertakes to elucidate the "theological anthropology" of Hesse, a study by no means as foreign to Hesse's work as one might expect in regard to fiction. As the words indicate "theological anthropology" treats matter pertinent to the author's perspective on man, his destiny and relation to God or the transcendent. The evidence that Hesse's works are autobiographical and therefore present his vision of man and God is plain and ample. His novels record his own search for self-realization.[1] Hugo Ball, Hesse's biographer, writes: "Es ist für den Dichter Hesse charakteristisch, daß er jeden Schritt seines Lebens dokumentiert hat. . . ."[2] American authority Joseph Mileck writes:

> . . . the inordinately egocentric nature of this art (Hesse's) is an immediate and inescapable fact. Like a hall of mirrors, the author's works never cease to

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[1] This term, self-realization, as used here includes no prejudgment about the place of human or divine activity in its achievement.

[2] Hugo Ball, Hermann Hesse, Sein Leben und Sein Werk (Berlin, 1927), p. 49.

> reflect his own image. . . .
>
> While Hesse's figure looms behind the person and fate of each of his pre-Demian heroes, in the decade to follow, author and hero gradually merge in a poetic, autobiographical fusion. Wayward Klein, frenzied Klingsor, and, in particular, the rheumatic Kurgast and the desperate Steppenwolf are almost flesh of Hesse's person and spirit of his being. Now, like Hesse, in serious quest of self-knowledge and of self-actualization, these new heroes shed their lethargy and take fate by the forelock. The outside world has more than ever become a mere setting for the prolonged drama of Hesse's Ich.[3]

And:

> One of Hesse's greatest consistencies was the life-long, immediate correspondence between his personal and his artistic development (Mileck, page 33).

In his essay "Ein Stückchen Theologie" the novelist himself says that all of his books are an attempt at describing his spiritual odyssey and developing his personal faith.[4] That this faith and this preoccupation with his own quest is not purely theological, i.e., in the narrow sense of the word, concerned with the nature of God, but rather with the self-understanding of man, will become patent. Despite the intensely personal nature of the spiritual quest recorded in these novels, they have a relevance and significance for other men which is well-attested by the recurring interest in his work in German-speaking countries, his posthumous popularity in the United States and the great interest in his works in such places as Japan.

[3] Joseph Mileck, Hermann Hesse and his Critics, Univ. of N.C. Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, No. 21 (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1958), p. 30. Further references to this work of Mileck will be given in the text thus: (Mileck, page 50).

[4] Hermann Hesse, "Ein Stückchen Theologie," Neue Rundschau, XLIII (1932), 736-747.

Before becoming more specific about the content of these volumes, a reminder about their nature should be given. The novels, because they are novels and not theological or philosophical studies, and because of an even more typically Hessean matter, their poetic, musical and at times surrealist character, rightly offer some intrinsic opposition to the kind of intellectual dissection which is proferred here. An attempt such as this, to "bring to numbers" the joys, griefs, agonies and searching of a serious man like Hesse inevitably has the character of literary sacrilege. But, while reverent contemplation and silent assimilation may be for an individual the richest and most fruitful approach to Hesse's novels, the more public work of theology, if it is to invade fiction, involves attempting some clarification, ordering and articulation of such a quest as Hesse's. This is not the place to bewail the disintegrating and atomizing character of such studies; they are the inevitable price of making such works accessible and utilizable by the world of theology and philosophy. This disintegration of the novelist's vision under the hand of the analyst is clearly no substitute for a more personal assimilation of these remarkable works. "But things are not so simple in life as in our thoughts, nor so rough and ready as in our poor idiotic language. . . ."[5]

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[5] Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf, trans. Basil Creighton, revised by Joseph Mileck and Horst Frenz (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 61.

The concern of these novels and that of our study are nearly identical. Hesse's religious quest, and that is not too strong a term for it, aims in novel after novel to solve the question of what man is meant to do with his life, his self particularly; how best he may harmonize the self's conflicting interests, powers and talents; how he may achieve, if this is indeed possible, some equipoise amid the Sturm und Drang of life, beset as he is by a host of contradictory, antagonistic pointers, passions and pressures.

A provisional consideration here of a few of the English and German terms that suggest themselves or are suggested in Hesse's works or in works about him may be clarifying regarding the nature of his life-long search. The distinghished psychotherapist, Rollo May, entitles one of his books Man's Search for Himself and interestingly enough quotes Hesse in explaining why this search is so topical:

> This is a time, as Hermann Hesse puts it, 'when a whole generation is caught. . .between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standards, no security, no simple acquiescence.'[6]

Elsewhere May suggests that a problem, more independent of time and place, is that people "have no definite experience of their own desires or wants" (page 14). May's own aim in this book whose title would so aptly describe Hesse's work is:

> . . . to discover ways in which we can stand against the insecurity of our time, to find a center of strength within ourselves, and as far as we can, to point the way toward achieving values and goals which can be depended upon in a day when very little is secure (page 8).

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[6] New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1953, p. 38.

What May speaks of here seems to be undeniably close to the heart of Hesse's quest, e.g., what Mileck describes as Hesse's Weg nach Innen (the title of a collection of several Hesse pieces) and Weg zu sich selber hin (Mileck, pages 20 and 22). Without attempting to isolate one as the definitive term there are some terms of special appropriateness. In "Ein Stückchen Theologie" the novelist, after describing various stages in the "Seelengeschichte des Menschen," uses Menschwerdung and Individuation for this task of men (pages 738-741). These are translatable as the process of becoming human, the humanization of a person, something which he says the greater number of men never accomplish.

Other expressions all cast their measure of light on the nature of Hesse's quest; one of the most obvious is Selbsterkenntnis, the search for self-knowledge. This is surely basic but in the final analysis not an encompassing term for the whole journey. Speaking of Steppenwolf Ball uses a related term Selbsterziehung (page 80), self-education, self-formation. This is certainly helpful in describing the process Hesse and some of his characters go through. In one of his letters Hesse denominates self-knowledge and self-education as essential needs of youth: "Das Bedürfnis der Jugend ist: sich selber ernst nehmen zu können. . . ." But in saying that the task of the old is, "sich selber opfern können," he is pointing to the preparatory character or transitory nature of self-knowledge.[7]

[7] Siegfried Unseld, ed. Das Werk von Hermann Hesse - Ein Brevier (Frankfurt am Main, 1952), p. 13.

Four other terms offer promising descriptions of the nature and goal of Hesse's search. Selbstverwirklichung: Along with Menschwerdung, self-realization will infallibly suggest itself to the reader as one aim or possibly the single aim of Hesse's search (Mileck, page 20). Selbstbejahung: The constant struggle through a number of the novels to find a place for both Geist and Natur, to accept all that is in man somehow, to overcome the dichotomies that seem to tear him apart, all three give the term self-affirmation real plausibility (Mileck, page 28). Selbstbestimmung: The effort to define the self in its uniqueness and irreplaceability is, again, a very apt description of much of the quest.[8] Selbstgesetzlichkeit: Ball sees Hesse, at least in his early novels, in the tradition of the German hero battling a repressive educational system for the individual's own legitimacy and value (page 84).

To one schooled in traditional Christian spirituality all this will suggest problems or questions about the relation of these somewhat homogeneous terms to another apparently contrasting set of hallowed expressions: self-denial, self-surrender, self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, self-abandonment. Is man meant to find himself? discover himself? lose himself? forget himself? become himself? The two sets of terms will be returned to in the course of the study.

This present work will concentrate attention on ten major novels of Hesse aided by reference to a few of his many other works and, minimally, to the work of other students of Hesse. To survey all of Hesse's works from the viewpoint of self-realization would be desirable and certainly clarifying but a task beyond the scope of a work like this. Apart from much indebtedness to Professor Mileck's invaluable work, reference to other works about Hesse's novels has been kept to a minimum in order to present here, as much as possible, this student's understanding of Hesse from an explicitly Christian and theological stance. The ten novels considered here are listed below with the dates of their original publication; titles are of the English translations referred to in this text, the German being given where the English diverges from the original title:

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[8] Ball, p. 84.

Peter Camenzind 1904
Beneath the Wheel 1906
Gertrude 1910
Rosshalde 1914
Demian 1919
Siddhartha 1922
Steppenwolf 1927
Narcissus and Goldmund 1930
Journey to the East 1932
Magister Ludi 1943 (*Das Glasperlenspiel*)

The procedure will be to analyze each novel for its implicit teaching regarding Hesse's search for self-realization. This will be done chronologically because a real development seems patent and such an order is most consistent with the confessedly autobiographical character of the works. Evaluation will be to a large degree left for the conclusion to allow Hesse's own thought to stand forth in the analyses. A chapter on the life of the novelist and on several

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essential influences which operate in the novels precedes the analyses. The final chapter evaluates and criticizes the main elements in Hesse's "theology."

CHAPTER I

Background of the novels: Hesse's life and important influences

Since Hesse's novels are autobiographical, the major events of his life and the predominant influences on his work are important. This first chapter will review the pertinent facts about his life and literary work (I) and then discuss the three foremost influences on his thought (II). Once the facts of his life are known, these influences are quite predictable: Pietism, romanticism and Eastern religious thought.

I. Life and Significant Literary History of Hermann Hesse

Hermann Hesse was born July 2, 1877, in the Swabian town of Calw, Württemberg. No matter how critical his reaction to it, his life and works show the powerful influence of his family background. This is unavoidably apparent in any consideration of his work. Hesse's stock was North and South German, partly French-Swiss and a bit Slavic. Both parents' families were devoutly and energetically Pietists, both had links to India; father Johannes Hesse had served for four years as a missionary in India and mother Marie Gundert Hesse was born in India of Pietist missionary parents. Hesse's father, severely Pietist in his religion, was also a very cultivated man of intellectual breadth, well-acquainted with German culture. Most of his life, aside from the missionary years, was spent in the service of the church in such occupations as editing church magazines. His wife Marie combined the estimable achievement of mothering nine children with ability as a linguist, poet and

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biographer. The intellectual and scholarly qualities of both parents could be matched in regard to Hesse's grandparents.

The early youth of young Hermann undoubtedly made intellectual pursuits more difficult for the parents. He was "a hypersensitive, imaginative, lively, and extremely headstrong child" (Mileck, page 5). Intellectually he was so gifted that he did not have to work to stay at the head of the class. There was another reason for his not working in school; he did not like it. He was sent to a church-related school, Maulbronn, presumably for theological studies, and was most unhappy. After a very short stay he ran away from the school and at age 14 attempted suicide. His education after this was in the hands of a variety of pastors and he spent a year at a gymnasium in Cannstatt before being expelled. This was the end of his formal education.

Next followed a brief period helping his father in his work, then a year in a machine shop, followed by four years in a bookshop in Tübingen. By this time he was writing poetry, as he was to do all his life, and publishing it. In 1899 he moved to Basel, Switzerland, and worked again in a bookshop while doing his writing till, by 1903, he was able to leave the shop and devote all his time to writing and allied activities such as editing reviews and the works of German authors. Switzerland was to remain his home nearly all the rest of his life.

The expatriate status in Switzerland is one of a number of striking similarities in his life to that of Friedrich Nietzsche for whose writing he felt a great affinity though he rarely if ever matched Nietzsche's stridency and bitterness. Like Nietzsche, he was born of a strict pastor's family in Germany. He shared with Nietzsche a great love of music, a strong individualism and a rather nostalgic feeling toward the "sunny South," Italy. Hesse's characters Demian and Steppenwolf have some links with Nietzsche's "Übermensch" (Overman or Superman).

Hesse's Literary Career: Period I

Joseph Mileck says well that Hesse's earliest literary period, from his first efforts up to the publication of Demian, is one of "uncertainty and vague presentiment." He appears as a "sensitive outsider who cannot cope directly with his particular problem of existence" (Mileck, page 14). His earliest works are of an aesthetic romanticism which leaves the reader hungering for more solid matter. Hesse himself soon noticed this and his first successful novel, Peter Camenzind (1904), is of somewhat hardier stuff. In the same year he married Maria Bernoulli of Basel and, significantly for our study, published a study of St. Francis of Assisi.

In 1906 he published Beneath the Wheel and in 1910 Gertrude. These years were a busy literary period. Besides writing longer works and poetry he edited a periodical and wrote reviews and articles. This was also a period of frequent trips to Italy and in 1911 to the Orient, to Ceylon, Malaya and Sumatra. From 1912 to 1919 he lived near Bern and suffered a number of tragedies and trials. His youngest son fell seriously ill; his father died; his wife became deranged and Hesse himself had to undergo psychoanalysis. Besides all the personal travail this period was marked by the War; Hesse was a pacifist and earned severe opprobrium in his native Germany. In 1914, Rosshalde appeared.

By 1919 Hesse's wife was in an asylum, his three sons with friends, while he wandered southward finally to settle in Casa Camuzzi ; [illegible] Montagnola (in Switzerland), for four years of an eremitical, poverty-stricken life.

Hesse's Literary Career: Period II

The publication of the successful Demian in 1919 begins what Mileck calls "the most dramatic and most critical years of his (Hesse's) life" (Mileck, page 20). The escape to Casa Camuzzi becomes, Mileck continues, a quest, a quest directed inwardly at himself, an attempt to know himself more deeply, profoundly. This attempt is so searching and unhesitating that the great tumult in the writer's psyche and the oscillations between great extremes erupt in the books of the period. Demian won the author both a literary prize, one of many that were to come his way, and a following among many young post-War Germans. Other works which are not being considered in this study show a move away from the Nietzschean feeling of Demian shortly afterwards to something less iconoclastic and Siddhartha (1922) presents a resolution of Hesse's tensions, a resolution, however, which was only apparent or temporary. Reflecting the turmoil in his inner life is his second marriage, in 1923, to Ruth Wenger, which was dissolved within a few months. The stress and upheaval of this period come to their wildest and most surrealist fruition in Steppenwolf, published in 1927. The clouds of the storm do clear somewhat in Steppenwolf to show a shaky acceptance of Geist rather than Natur, and of the conciliatory and pacific function of humor and the transcendent promise of music.

Hesse's Literary Career: Period III

This final period can be bounded by the publication of Narcissus and Goldmund in 1930 and Hesse's death in 1962. Mileck thinks that Hesse had reached a modus vivendi with himself in the previous period and now comes "to terms with life at large" (Mileck, page 27). The frenetic movement of Steppenwolf certainly seems to be passed or transcended now and Hesse's acceptance of his own path and destiny assured. The more difficult question is the character of Hesse's attempt to relate himself to the broader world.

In 1931 a good friend gave Hesse a more substantial home, Casa Bodmer, still near Montagnola in southern Switzerland, and Hesse brought his third wife, Ninon Ausländer, there the same year. She was to be with him to the end. Journey to the East appeared in 1932, a fantasy about the Hessean quest. The Nazis during this time very willingly saw Hesse's popularity eclipsed in Germany and it had to wait till after the Second World War for a revival in Germany. His final and most ambitious novel in many ways, Magister Ludi, was published in 1943 and Hesse received the Nobel Prize in 1946.

II. Important Influences in Hesse's Life and Literary Work

A. Pietism

Hesse's biographer and his work tell us that Hesse was deeply impressed by the family milieu in Calw (and a few years in Basel), especially by its combination of small town Pietism and a rather more worldly intellectual life.[1] Both facets of the Hesse family spirit are important for a consideration here of the Pietist background and its influence in Hesse and his works. First it will be necessary to understand the general sense and meaning of Pietism, then its special character in the Hesse household in Württemberg, one of the last strongholds of Pietism, then Hermann Hesse's reactions to it, in youth, in later life and in his novels.

Pietism was a development of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century in continental Protestantism. To narrow it further, it was primarily a development within Lutheranism, a reaction against the aridity and rationalism of Lutheran scholasticism and orthodoxy. Against this type of religion with its accent on right belief and against the Enlightenment Pietism aimed to emphasize "the experience of the living Christ in the hearts of men."[2] It is expressive of the age-old tendency in religion to protest against the replacement of experience by intellectualism and systematizing. The opposition of the early Pietists to rationalism in religion often put them in conflict with the official church, but generally they remained within it except in the case of the Moravians. Along with their aversion to rationalistic religion, to doctrinal speculation, they differed from official Lutheranism in expecting that justification would show itself here and now in some visible progress in perfection. This may have accounted for some of their rigidity in regard to ethical practice and a tendency at times to self-righteousness. They were further distinguished from their Protestant contemporaries by an intense interest in missionary work, very evident in Hesse's forefathers.

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[1] Ball, Hermann Hesse, Sein Leben und Sein Werk, p. 20.

[2] John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 124.

Heta Baaten has treated the Württemberg Pietism of Hesse family's in a dissertation, part of which is available.[3] This and details from Hugo Ball's biography help reconstruct more particularly what may have been the religious ambiance of Hesse's youth. Of overarching significance for understanding Württemberg Pietism is its comparative neglect of the first article of the Creed, that which treats of God as creator, in favor of a strong stress on the second article which treats the redemption accomplished in Jesus Christ. Pietism as a consequence, in its more ordinary form, fostered the practical Christian life with a vigorous emphasis on morality and behavior. Consistent with this dogmatic emphasis are the ethical or moral traits of this Pietism. Since God's creation of the world and its consequent goodness are not central, it was easier for Pietism to consider all that was not immediately concerned with redemption--social life, the world of reason and scholarship, the world of music and poetry and art, the entire life of the senses--as matters of no consequence or even as affairs to be despised by the devout.

The position of the church in the life of the Pietist, of course, suffered somewhat because of the necessity felt by the Pietists of opposing its erring ways. But this led to no such anti-institutionalism as may be found, for instance, in the early history of the Quakers. Rather, they were in a position similar to the Methodists, in many ways heirs of theirs, in feeling forced to separate themselves from the parent body. Though such Pietism did not limit the practices of Christian life to the church building and church worship remained important, the service had to be Pietist, not any kind of rationalist Lutheran service.

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[3] Heta Baaten, "Die pietistische Tradition der Familien Gundert und Hesse" (Bochum-Langendreer, 1934), part of a doctoral dissertation, 42 pp.

While the Hesses as good Pietists must have given nominal allegiance to this attitude, one cannot but be struck by massive exceptions on their part to all this. Grandfather Gundert was a rather extraordinary linguist and scholar. Grandfather Hesse was a distinguished citizen of his town in Estonia, jovial and appreciative of wine, unconventional enough to climb trees in his old age, fond of music and, in general, by no means pessimistic or unsociable in behavior or attitude.[4] Hesse's father was well acquainted not only with ecclesiastical matters and theology, but with the writers of German romanticism and the family had a rich library of German culture. Hesse's mother presents a more difficult problem. While she sang and played with her children, loved music, a sterner self showed clearly. In her youth she had spent some time in a strict Pietist settlement and her passion for the absolute and a severe heroism was evident in her personality (Ball, pp. 73 ff.). Ball says that unguarded impulses, lack of control, excess in those around her, all

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[4] Ball, passim.

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drove her into another world, and produced a coldness in her (page 74). Very likely, both parents evidenced to some degree two other traits of Swabian Pietism: an emphasis on the inherent sinfulness of man, his impulses and feelings, and the necessity of breaking the will, bringing man to submission to God.

Ball adduces evidence (pages 15 ff.) that the Hesse family did not hesitate, as a result of its wide travel, experience and its acquaintance with modern, biblical criticism, to develop its own variety of Pietism, somewhat broader and freer than that of Swabia in general.

Before looking at some of the novelist's own responses to this piety, it is possible to say that the Hesse family seems to have been loyal, not fanatical, Pietists who qualified their religion with their own cosmopolitanism and intellectualism as well as with their balanced humanity. With all this the likelihood must, however, be allowed for that the sterner aspects of Pietism were not missing. Though it is true historically of Pietism that "the emphasis has been turned away from God who is the object of faith and toward the subjective attitudes and emotional state of the believer,"[5] there seems little evidence for any excessively emotional Pietism in the Hesses. An emphasis on redemption that would eclipse creation certainly facilitates a spirituality centered more on the effects of God's activity in man than on God's somewhat more disinterested activity of creation. This may be termed "subjective" but not necessarily emotional. And

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[5] Dillenberger and Welch, p. 319.

Heta Baaten argues that there was no undue stress in the Hesses' Pietism on the subjective appropriation of salvation over the objective historical saving act itself (Baaten, page 38).

Hesse's own reaction to his family's Pietism and what he drew from it for weal or woe is complex. In his works on the one hand (as Ball has pointed out, page 20), he pictures fine craftsmen as Pietists and contrasts them with the cold, skeptical parsons of the official church; on the other hand, his works offer attacks on small-minded moralism and sin-consciousness of a kind which could easily be described as Pietist. In _Beneath the Wheel_ the Pietist Flaig represents the humane, gentle and devout as opposed to the rationalistic pastor and the harsh and ambitious parent and teacher. _Magister Ludi_ gives Hesse an opportunity to do homage to great Swabian Pietist pastors such as Johann Albrecht Bengel and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger. The other side of the coin may be represented in Harry Haller's parents who had never allowed dancing. His more formal statements on religion likewise give us a picture of an ambivalent attitude toward Pietism. In "Ein Stückchen Theologie" Hesse makes a division, not meant to be watertight, between _Der Vernünftige_ (the rational mind) and _Der Fromme_ (the devout believer) in the matter of religion. Interestingly he places himself among the devout and ascribes to this segment of mankind attitudes that would certainly sit well on the true Pietist, e.g., a trust in spiritual experience (page 743), a mistrust of reason (page 745) and an emphasis on the private and personal in opposition to the rational man's tendency to organization and work for progress (pages 743-744).

Colleville quotes both warm, pleasant recollections by Hesse of his childhood home and Hesse's more bitter reminiscences of severe piety, an omnipresent pall cast by a strong sense of sin and the need to subdue man's will and tendencies.[6] Colleville sees this second view of Hesse as "la vraie, la plus profonde, la plus durable, la plus conforme à la réalité."[7] Hesse's own words as quoted by Hugo Ball tell of his adolescent revolt and how he saw what he was revolting against:

> Fromm war ich nur bis etwa zum dreizehnten Jahr (bis zur Erkenntnis des Dichterberufes). Bei meiner Confirmation, mit vierzehn Jahren, war ich schon ziemlich skeptisch, and bald darauf begann mein Denken and meine Phantasie ganz weltlich zu werden, ich empfand, trotz grosser Liebe und Verehrung für sie, doch die Art von pietistischer Frömmigkeit, in der meine Eltern lebten, als etwas Ungenügendes, irgendwie Subalternes, auch Geschmackloses, und revoltierte im Beginn der Jünglingsjahre heftig dagegen (Ball, page 79).

Baaten corroborates the predominance of harsher elements in Hesse's Pietist youth and speculates that he found it too constricting and gave up Christianity completely as a result.

> Ein Künstler von der Art Hermann Hesses konnte mit dieser beschnittenen 'Wirklichkeit' nicht leben. Er spürte den 'Mangel an Enthusiasmus und Entgegenkommen, an Kindsköpfigkeit und Bildvergnügen' (Hugo Ball). Er

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[6] It is hard to imagine that some of the light and gentle piety of Hesse's paternal grandfather did not persist in the Hesse home. Indicative of his spirituality is this quoted by Ball (page 11):

> Mein Heiland liebt frohe Kinder, und warum soll ich denn nicht lachen und jubeln, da ich so reich bin, weiss ich doch, dasz ich meinen Heiland habe.

[7] Maurice Colleville, "Le problème religieux dans le vie et l'oeuvre de Hermann Hesse," *Etudes Germaniques*, 7e Année (1953, p. 126.

> fand keinen Raum in diesem Pietismus, weder für sein Leben noch für sein Dichten, da gab er die ganze Sache, das ganze Christentum auf; nicht bloss die Form, die gewiss verkümmert und eng genug war, sondern den Inhalt gleich mit (Baaten, page 40).

What has been seen of "official" Pietist teaching undoubtedly would make it more of a blight than a blessing on creative and artistic effort. However, to say that Hesse gave up Christianity completely is a shade too strong. And, once again, this discussion of the Hesse family's Pietism cannot be concluded without balancing the indisputably oppressive and restrictive nature of Pietism vis-a-vis the artistic temperament with reference to Hesse's own appreciation of certain elements in it:

> Es gab Konflikte and Bangigkeiten, man stand unter dem Gesetz, aber es gab auch Fröhlichkeiten und Feste. . . (Gedenkblätter, [1947], p. 206), quoted by Mileck, page 176.

B. Romanticism

To write of Hesse's relation to romanticism or his indebtedness to it by no means implies an explanation of his thought. True, the categorization is attractive and his biographer, Hugo Ball, writes: "Hermann Hesse ist der letzte Ritter aus dem glanzvollen Zuge der Romantik. Er verteidigt die Nachhut" (Ball, page 24). Like most men of any genius he resists such limiting denomination. Another reason for rejecting any too close identification of Hesse's thought with romanticism is the extraordinary difficulty involved in isolating particular factors as purely romantic. Typifying anyone or any characteristic as romantic is in itself inappropriate insofar as romanticism resists the use of the label "typical."

Provisionally, Crane Brinton's words about romanticism may serve to define the spirit of romanticism. The term is "protean" and "the despair of a rigorous semanticist;" he goes on to elaborate:

> . . . W. T. Jones insists that romanticism can only be understood as a very complex syndrome of 'biases' in the direction of what he calls the dynamic, the disordered, the continuous, the soft-focused, the inner, the this-worldly.[8]

Further, and appropriately for a study of Hesse, Brinton refers to Goethe's Faust as "itself a masterly summary of romantic themes: revolt against the dullness, the narrowness of rationalism. . . ; striving for etwas mehr, for the infinite. . . ; contempt for the Philistine, the literal-minded ordinary man. . . ; primitivism. . . ; ambivalence. . ." (Brinton, page 208).

Much that could be attributed to romanticism is equally at home in Pietism or in Eastern religions, both of which are of at least comparable weight in Hesse's background. Factors such as a primary concern with the individual rather than with the corporate, with inner perfection or development, are common to Pietism, romanticism and the religions of the East generally. Matters are further complicated by the role the German romantics played in introducing Eastern thought to Europe and their espousal of it. Additionally, the genius of such lived moments often embraces opposite characteristics in such a way that one special emphasis is virtually negated by a like emphasis on a logically opposing factor. So, as with Pietism and the Eastern religions, the attempt here will only be to show possible areas of agreement and common inspiration without presuming to establish specific indebtedness or to unequivocally classify any one element as romantic to the exclusion of the label Taoist.

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[8] Crane Brinton, "Romanticism", The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Co.) VII, p. 206.

Work has been done more appropriately elsewhere on Hesse's indebtedness to specific authors and works in the stream of German romanticism. The movement itself, Josiah Royce would say, includes German writers born between 1765 and 1775; Royce calls 1848 the end of the movement. The reader can satisfy himself as to Hesse's relations to writers of this period in works dedicated to this intriguing and illusive task.[9] These studies attempt to trace the influence of particular works and authors in Hesse's own work, especially of writers with whom Hesse admittedly had much contact and whom he admired. Typical of the writers most often mentioned in this connection are: E. T. A. Hoffmann, Brentano, Jean Paul, Novalis, Schleiermacher, Hölderlin, Mörike and Nietzsche. A savant and interpreter of the Renaissance, not necessarily a romanticist, whom both Nietzsche and Hesse greatly admired deserves to be mentioned at least in passing, Jakob Burckhardt. Both confessed their admiration of him and their debt to his thought.

To understand the genius of romanticism may be of value if it assists us in discovering the direction of the more latent and ambiguous tendencies in Hesse's work. Following a brief inquest into the nature of romanticism it will be possible to suggest, at least,

[9] See Hugo Ball, Hermann Hesse and K. Weibel, Hermann Hesse und die deutsche Romantik (Winterthur: Verlag P. G. Keller, 1954).

some elements in Hesse's ten novels whose presence might be traced to his immersion in the romantic tradition. For this brief study we have chosen a theologian, himself of the German romantic tradition, Paul Tillich; a philosopher, well acquainted with German philosophy and the romantic movement, Josiah Royce; and a contemporary of less definable specialty, Erich Heller, a literary student and analyst, also in direct contact with the German tradition. Some synthesis of their thought on the subject should give an adequate and sufficiently penetrating picture of romanticism.

Heller refutes well the tempting simplification of romanticism which would call it the "rebellion of the imagination against the ever more arrogant claims of rationality."[10] He points out that some of the chief protagonists of the movement, such as Friedrich Schlegel were, on the contrary, most concerned to unite mind and fancy. Similarly, calling romanticism the "release of irrational forces"[11] is deceptively attractive especially since the unconscious does play such a singularly prominent role in the work of a man like Hesse. Nevertheless the roots of romanticism must be found in something broader, more adequate to all the writers and thought embraced by the term. A remark of Hesse himself to Joseph Mileck places us where our other sources also would situate romanticism essentially. Hesse says that romanticism put the emphasis on the Ich and its own truth over against the classic view which embraces "accepted forms and universal truths."[12] The very theme of this paper, so difficult to distinguish from the total content of Hesse's novels, affirms the centrality of this romantic emphasis in his work. Heller underlines the essentiality of this concern in romantic art when he notes that it has "swarmed with spirits alienated from the world; and it has shown processions of authors vainly in search of their 'real' person. . ." (Heller, page 130). Despite the note of disdain for this subjectivity Heller's remarks only confirm what Josiah Royce will tell us below and what Hesse's novels constantly probe.

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[10] Erich Heller, The Artist's Journey into the Interior and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1959), p. 84.

[11] Maurice Benn, "An Interpretation of the Work of Hermann Hesse" (Unpub. diss., University of London, 1948), p. 28.

In a chapter entitled "The Romantic School of Philosophy" Royce relates romanticism to the history of German philosophy and discovers its roots in German idealism. What he says states Hesse's conviction about the *Ich* in more philosophical terms. The ego is not only central; as the romantics show us, it is capable in itself of creating actually the whole world we see:

> The real thing in itself, according to Fichte, is the active I, the Ego, the subject of self-consciousness . . . . To watch the activity of this great source of our being, to sound the depths of its endless nature, is to come to the true knowledge of God and of things which Spinoza already demanded for the wise man, and which Kant sought in vain in the external world . . . ."[13]

Heller, drawing from the same philosophical stream, quotesHegel's confirmation of all this:

[12] Joseph Mileck, "A Visit with Hermann Hesse and a Journey from Montagnola to Calw," *Modern Language Forum*, xli (June 1956), p. 4.

[13] Josiah Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Col, 1892), p. 165.

> 'The true content of Romantic art is absolute inwardness. . . . In this pantheon all the gods are dethroned and consumed in the fire of subjectivity' (Heller, page 159).

As a consequence of this Hegel saw the evaporation of the outer world into insignificance, a result easily descernible in romantic works and in Hesse's Demian:

> 'It is,' writes Hegel, 'the inner world which is the content of Romantic art; and although this inwardness must--in art--show itself outwardly, it yet triumphs over the external and shows its victory over it. . . by reducing it to relative insignificance' (Heller, pages 132, 133).

In Hesse there are, of course, passages of great verisimilitude and detailed description as, for instance, of apple-pressing in Beneath the Wheel, yet generally it is true that the life of a novel like Demian or Steppenwolf is quite independent of external events. The "events" of Steppenwolf are quite inseparable from the mind of Harry Haller; their external reality is of little if any import. The activities, places or events to which Hesse gives much detailed attention are often too, one suspects, of value to his own psyche. They are events which he recalls with savor and sweet emotion. All this is itself decidedly romantic as is his frequent use of dreams, yearnings. Heller speaks of certain "remembered tableaux or scenes" which are redolent with special emotion for romantics and quotes T. S. Eliot on the matter: "'they come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer '" (Heller, page 135).

Moreover the idiosyncratic character of such remembrances, the fact that this particular reminiscence means so much to the author, is such that his readers need not necessarily be immediately able to respond to it with the same fervor. What is important, after all, is not so much the remembrance as what it evokes for the author:

> It is of this Romantic mind of art, enclosed within itself and regarding the external world as a mere assemblage of cues for its monologues, that Hegel says: It does not make much of a difference to which circumstances it applies itself or which it encounters. . . (Heller, page 135).

Insofar as it elicits some response in feeling or thought the external world comes to have meaning for the romantic artist. Nature, the non-human world around us, undoubtedly for this reason attracts the romantic. At least mute, at most ambiguous, Nature lends itself easily to interpretation by romantic imagination. In her the romanticist can find a reflection of his own moods or an appropriate setting for them and there is no way either to dispute or confirm his interpretation, if that were to trouble him. Of the works we are to consider _Peter Camenzind_ most clearly illustrates this use of Nature. Such usage finds less place in Hesse's later work though Nature again is writ large in _Narcissus and Goldmund_. However, even when and if Nature fails the artist he is not finished. As Royce says, he can and does dream out his own world (Royce, page 174). Even apart from Nature's role as springboard for the imagination, the romantic _Ich_ is quite capable of spinning out a world of its own.[14] The bizarre events of Harry Haller's life in Steppenwolf are exemplifications of this creative dreaming, rooted in the unconscious and brought to conscious articulation by the writer. The romantic artist is ever seeing visions, seeing what a more pedestrian imagination misses. "The Invisible always steals the show of Romantic art" (Heller, page 133).

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[14] Royce writes:

> The world is essentially what men of genius make it. Let us be men of genius, and make what we choose. We shall then be as gods, knowing good and evil.
>
> The world is indeed the world as self-consciousness builds it; but the true self is the self that men of genius, poets, constructive artists know. . . (pages 173, 174).

From Peter Camenzind even into that more complex and somewhat classical work, Magister Ludi, the works of Hesse considered here all attest to the primacy of the Ich, to inwardness. In the first four novels this appears in the constant dwelling on the feelings, moods and restless musing of the protagonists. Camenzind seems, indeed, to be quite hindered by his inability to live outside his own thought sufficiently. Kuhn in Gertrude lives more of his life and loves in his imagination and dreams than in reality. One is surprised that he gets to the point of even writing Gertrude of his love. In Rosshalde Veraguth muses through much of the book about his impossible marital situation and is only prodded into thought of a change by his friend. A more active spirit takes over in subsequent works but the activity is, again, largely in terms of the will and thought while dreams play an always important role. One particular dream grows in intensity from the early works through Demian, Steppenwolf, and Narcissus and Goldmund. This is the dream of the primal mother, the earth mother, the universal mother, an idealized woman who, usually, combines masculine traits with her own to give us an androgynous picture. Weibel sees Hesse's romanticism as

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essentially his Weg zur Mutter.[15] The expansion of the image to include a variety of opposites in synthesis or balance is, as will be seen below, essentially a romantic preoccupation shared, of course, with the Indian religions.

Before proceding to a discussion of Romantic Irony, probably one of the most pervasive of romantic ideals, it will be useful here to list Royce's six distinguishing features of the romantic school. In lieu of the prolonged and inappropriate study of romanticism these perceptive remarks are helpful and assure at least passing reference to the essentials of the movement. Royce says of the writers and philosophers of the romantic school (pages 174-175):

1. "They suggest rather than complete;" analysis is ordinarily not their strongest quality but an intuitive grasp of things is very evident and is given to the reader in evocative and suggestive language.

2. "They interpret the world rather in terms of sentiment and of bold divination than in terms of the moral law." In reaction to earlier spirits of German intellectual history the romantics introduce an aesthetic rather than a moral or ethical evaluation of the universe and man's position in it. There will be ample indications throughout this work of such a perspective in Hesse. Rarely does he make any great show of despising morality but in much of his work to be studied here matters are judged, if at all, in terms of personal fulfillment, satisfaction, aesthetically therefore,

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[15] Hermann Hesse und die deutsche Romantik, page 17.

rather than on the basis of any moral law or external standard. Or, of course, one may say that his moral standard is simply a matter of evaluation in terms of help toward human fulfillment and development. Hesse's predilection for the aesthetic view of things has relations, obviously, to his passion for some ultimate unity of good and evil, of male and female, of all opposites, a matter to be discussed below.

3. Again, situating the romantics in a background of German philosophy and letters Royce says they find more interest in external nature than did Fichte. As should be clear from remarks above this interest in nature is rarely or hardly scientific but is directed toward nature insofar as the latter may serve as catalyst in the chemistry of the author's emotion and imagination. The romantic writer invests it with qualities possible imperceptible to more analytic minds.

4. We are embodiments of God. Tillich makes this claim fundamental to romanticism and explains it further: "The divine is not in some place alongside of the world or above the world, but is present in everything human and natural."[16] This continuity between human and the divine is strong in Hesse and is reinforced by the influence of the Eastern religions (very apparent in Siddhartha).

5. Nature's forms are symbolic of man's inner life. Allusions to this have already been made. In Hesse this is clearest in the earlier work especially in Peter Camenzind where Peter sees the wind,

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[16] Paul Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 76.

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storms, trees and clouds all as mirroring or sharing his emotions.

6. Feeling is an indispensable guide to reason. The romanticists seem here to have been making an improvement on one-sided reliance on analytic reason so constant a temptation to European thought. This faith in feeling probably has deep roots in a particular conception of man, a conception of his innate goodness. While sharing this trust in feeling Hesse himself is more complex. Many of the struggles of his characters are with the dichotomies in man of which reason and feeling is one; variously the struggle may be between intellect and instinct, matter and spirit, _Geist_ and _Natur_.

Romantic Irony

If the formulation attributed to Heinrich Heine, _Trieb nach Unendlichkeit_, is taken as distinctive of romanticism over against _Trieb nach Vollendung_ as characteristic of classicism, then this study is close to the notion of Romantic Irony. And with that we are, it seems, at the heart of a most consistent element in Hesse's mature works. In all of these there is an unwillingness to rest in one state or form of self-realization, a constant driving beyond what is or has been to something new, something yet to be, a _Trieb nach Unendlichkeit_. Amid all the emphasis on self-realization in such works as _Demian_ there is still the conviction of the provisional nature of any completion or realization.

Romantic Irony is a difficult concept to bring to clarity and precision. It may help to start a discussion of it by noting that it is rooted in what has already been seen as essential to romanticism, the emphasis on the central position of the ego. The ego or self in

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romantic works such as Hesse's is the subject which endlessly searches for satisfactory expression or realization of itself and its mainfold desires, wishes, thoughts and dreams. In the romantic this quest is not one which he expects to see completed in some foreseeable future. Rather, realization or embodiment of this self or ego will be at most a temporary resting. The image of a bird alighting here and there and seemingly so unbound to this earth, ever moving, is an appropriate and oft-used romantic image which Hesse is attracted to in Demian and Siddhartha particularly. The romantic ego has here, in any place, no lasting perch; it expects no definitive incarnation here and now of its ideal or dream.

Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) is especially responsible for the term Romantic Irony and its delineation. Tillich says that for Schlegel "Irony means that the infinite is superior to any finite concretion and drives beyond to another finite concretion" (page 89). What Tillich says here of the infinite may seem contradictory to the previous paragraph on the ego or self, but for German romanticism the infinite and the ego do not seem to be that distinct. After all, the ego's capacity for world-creating and reconstruction has already been noted. The relation or near identity of the two is clear in this passage from Heller:

> And Schelling placed at the very center of his System of Transcendental Idealism the idea, already very Hegelian, that Nature was nothing but the 'Odyssey of Mind,' Mind in pursuit of the ultimate reaches of reflection and self-reflection, Mind seeking and then again, 'wondrously deceived,' fleeing from itself, shining, as if through semi-transparent mists, through the sensuous appearances of the world, just as meaning shines through words--Mind, Rationality,

Absolute Consciousness: 'the promised land of the Imagination' (Heller, page 82).

The Hegelian Mind or Absolute is in practice for the romantic artist his own ego or self which is set on a course of creation. It definitely is regarded as an infinitely rich and varied entity; certainly it is such in Demian, Siddhartha and Steppenwolf. This will be at the heart of one of the great difficulties in offering a critique of Hesse's thought on the self and its development. Nowhere can one rest and say unequivocally, "Here is what Hesse believed." Each such belief is negated by a new form of life or living which in turn is of relative value, and so on. In view of the over-all pattern of Hesse's thought on life and in terms of one very important work such as Steppenwolf one can certainly see Romantic Irony as having a strong foothold in Hesse's basic thought. Steppenwolf hammers at the notion that every single expression of man's personality must be broken and parted with in favor of a new configuration and so on continually. Hesse leaves no doubt in his odyssey through the three works mentioned above that he is involved in a series of experiments each of which may have value but none of which is to be regarded as absolute. He well illustrates Royce's remarks:

> Trust your genius; follow your noble heart; change your doctrine whenever your heart changes, and change your heart often. Such is the practical creed of the romanticists (Royce, page 173).

Even the more classicist Magister Ludi illustrates the changeableness, this transcendence of the particular moment in Knecht's parting with Castalia.

If this sounds like an invitation to live in and from mood to mood and to give a value to such moods as would make an Aristotle or Aqinas or Kant shudder, the reader's understanding is correct. Schlegel says: ". . . best do they comprehend truth who have experienced the most moods" (Royce, page 176). The individual ego and its experiences from moment to moment have a primacy scandaloous to the much sought-after objectivity of the classicist and to the scientist. Though it should be noted that the deepest opposition is between classicist and romanticist, not between the latter and the scientific method. Scientific method, after all, does allow for and require recognition of the provisional character of its theories, that they are to be superceded by new models. In this there is a coincidence of interest with the romanticist. Nevertheless, the romanticist canonizes terms which to the classicist and scientist can only be opprobrious, terms such as "fickle":

> The truly philosophic attitude towards life and reality is therefore one of a sort of courageous fickleness. Schlegel himself called it the romantic irony" (Royce, page 176).

If Emerson said that consistency was the refuge of small minds then he was speaking as a romantic. The truth apprehended by the romantic is due inevitably to be superseded or severely qualified by a new intuition of the truth which will be "equally creditable but also equally fickle, false" (Royce, page 176). The Steppenwolf could be encouraged, for example, to take the pieces of his personality and rearrange them continually in new gestalts; why cling to one as better than another: The river in Siddhartha, with its constant change and movement amid a certain continuity, likewise will mirror the life of men and his "courageous fickleness". And this is man's glory, not his

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complaint. "The deepest truth known to me is that erelong my present truth will change;" this is true wisdom according to Schlegel (quoted in Royce, page 176). This is similar to another somewhat paradoxical statement of Schlegel's reported by Heller:

> It was Friedrich Schlegel who once defined Romantic Irony as the clear consciousness of the ceaselessly active turmoil of life, of its infinitely rich chaos (Heller, page 87). (Italics Heller's)

From another viewpoint, the chaos which romanticism sees and accepts can be termed or is at least very near to nihilism or a state of uprootedness and lostness. By the standards of classicism and much of Western tradition this all leads to a reprehensible or dangerous sort of relativism. Tillich speaks of the "dissolution of traditional ethics" which is a consequence of constant ironical transcendence of given forms.

> Wherever you find this, it has to do with this romantic ironical elevation of the individual subject beyond the given forms (Tillich, page 89).

In Tillich's analysis the centrality or hegemony of the individual subject and his right to question all forms easily leads to this rootlessness: "a sense of emptiness sets in" (page 89). The meaning of life is lost and man is faced with somehow living in confusion or with finding meaning anew for himself.

Whether or not it may all be due to romanticism, Hesse illutrates in his novels a series of characters faced with this same problem: they are bereft of faith in established norms and on a quest for their own pattern. In two essays on The Brothers Karamozov and The Idiot of Dostoevski Hesse sees some of the Russian's characters (with affinities to his own) typifying this state and as somewhat prophetic of the decades ahead. The essay was first published in Bern in 1920 and appeared in English as In Sight of Chaos, 1923. He sees in Myshkin, the Idiot, a character like one of his own. What he says about him expresses well what Tillich sees as a consequence of romanticism and also, one must suspect, the situation of characters like Sinclair and Harry Haller.

> Myshkin is different from others because, as an Idiot and an epileptic who is at the same time an exceptionally clever man, he has much closer and less obscure relationships with the Unconscious. He has had rare instants of intuitive perception, occasional seconds of transcendent exaltation. For a lightning moment he has felt the all-being, the all-feeling, the all-suffering, the all-understanding. He has known all that is in the world. There lies the kernel of his magical being. He has not studied and is not endowed with mystical wisdom, he has not even aspired to it. He has simply experienced the thing itself. He has not merely had occasional significant thoughts and ideas. He has literally, once and more than once, stood on the magic borderland where everything is affirmed, where not only the remotest thought is true, but also the contrary of such thought.
>
> . . . .
>
> The Idiot is, as I said, from time to time near that borderland where every thought and its opposite are equally true. That is, he has an intuitive perception that no thought, no law, no mould, no form exist which are true and right except as regarded from one pole--and every pole has its opposite. The situation of a pole, the taking up, that is to say, of a position from which to view and order the world, is the first stage in the foundation of every cultural form, of every society and morality. Whosoever considers Spirit and Nature, Spirit and Freedom, Good and Evil as interchangeable, if only for a moment, is the deadliest foe of every order of civilization. For here begins the contrary of Order; there begins Chaos.
>
> A line of thought which turns back to the Unconscious, to Chaos, disturbs every human system of order.

Speaking of new "truth":

> Each one must approach it alone, each one for himself. Each one of us must in one hour of his life stand on the threshold of the borderland where Myshkin stood, where truths cease and new ones begin.[17]

In Demian the questioning of all norms is abundantly clear. Siddhartha more quietly traces the path of another questioner as he moves through and away from a series of philosophies of life. Harry Haller, the Steppenwolf, similarly flounders and suffers in his personal life in a world where no values seem given and certain. Ultimately he finds his anchor in the Immortals. Each protagonist seeks to find something to live by, to believe in. Simply put one may see Sinclair's ideal, taught him by Demian, as that of a kind of self-made superman. Hesse himself wrote of this search for value:

> So often young people take very seriously (in Steppenwolf) what is said about the madness of our age and miss what I consider wiser. It is not enough to lambast war, technology, nationalism--one must be able to place a belief in place of the false gods of the age. This I have constantly done. In Steppenwolf there is Mozart and the Immortals and the Magic Theatre; in Demian and in Siddhartha the same values under other names. With the belief which Siddhartha calls love and with Harry's belief in the Immortals one can live, of that I'm sure. One can not only bear, endure life, but one must also conquer the times[18] (Unseld, p. 42). (Writer's own translation)

Hesse's apotheosis of the Immortals, artists like Mozart and their creations, it may be noted, comes close to Schelling's thought of art as "the great miracle, the unique miracle in all history. It is a miracle which would have to appear only once in the world to convince us of the presence of the ultimate" (Tillich, page 83).

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[17] Trans. Stephen Hudson (Zurich: Verlag Seldwyla, 1923), pages 57-59, 64.

[18] Das Werk von Hermann Hesse--Ein Brevier (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1952), p. 42 (my translation).

The man Tillich regards as "the most refined critical representative of romantic irony," Schlegel, found the solution to the problem of meaning in a world where all could be questioned in becoming a Roman Catholic. Tillich sees this as another alternative, attractive to men in periods of chaos, the acceptance of a system which offers a set of given values. He says:

> This means that out of the feeling of emptiness he (Schlegel) gained the desire to subject himself to an authoritarian system in which the contents were already given to him. This is a radical situation which has been repeated again and again among the European intelligentsia, both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially after the World Wars, after the great catastrophes in Europe. Many people out of a sense of meaninglessness or lack of any contents which are normative, binding, and productive of community, etc., returned to the Roman Catholic Church as the embracing and protecting mother (page 90).

Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism and the reference to "the embracing and protective mother" are both of singular appropriateness for our study of Hesse. Though Hesse admitted to feelings of hostility toward Catholicism he nevertheless felt an attraction to it which he termed a weakness and a temptation.[19] Playing a much greater role in his novels is the "mother." In fact as has been noted, Weibel says that Hesse's romanticism is essentially summed up as the "way back to the mother." In studying the novels the extraordinary place given to a dream image of the universal mother, mother Eve, will be clear. Anything that might shed light on this puzzling and intriguing figure is worth considering. What suggests itself here is the question: Was Hesse's interest in Catholicism related to his constant search for this primal mother who embraced all opposites in herself and was like a warm, productive Heimat to him? If, by way of a fairly common simplification, Catholicism is thought of as exemplifying the mother principle with its appeal to the other than rational powers (through music, ritual, sacraments, etc.) and of Protestantism as standing for the more paternal principle with its emphasis on the Word of God and preaching, then Hesse's attraction to the former is certainly consonant with his obvious predilections. His mystical concern and any number of details in the novels all attest to the strength of this side of his personality without, of course, nullifying some very strongly Protestant, Pietist, traits.

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[19] Colleville, op. cit., pp. 140, 141.

In beginning this brief study of romanticism and Hesse it was said that such study might suggest, at least, the ultimate direction of some of Hesse's own rather obscure tendencies. Might it not be said, without exhibiting undue Catholic bias, that the ethos and spirit of Catholicism did offer to Hesse, as did some Eastern religions, the completion of his more narrowly and "paternally" educated psyche, that she could have been, if not in the most ultimate sense, at least to some degree, his mother? It is hardly necessary to point out how often other artists and thinkers have found the Catholic Church to be for them in some sense an "embracing and protective mother."

Elsewhere allusion has been made to the relatively unimportant status in these novels of story and events compared to form and to

Hesse's personal quest. Hesse himself confirms this in a letter which also admits his membership in the German romantic tradition. Boulby translates it:

> The story as disguised lyric poetry, the novel as a borrowed label for the attempts of poetic personalities to express their experience of themselves and the world, this was a specifically German and Romantic matter, in this I at once realized myself to be involved and to share responsibility.[20]

Apart from the matter of this use of the novel, Hesse seems also to share with the romantics, whether derived from them or not, the essential characteristics which have been discussed above. The primacy of the Ich, of the ego's self-understanding and quest for realization, is indubitably clear to the point where Hesse has been accused of egocentrism. The works considered here are only apt for this study because they are, as Hesse has said, the account of his own spiritual journeyings. The well-nigh constant dissatisfaction with and rejection of all solutions to the ego-problem in the works to be considered is easily subsumed under the concept of Romantic Irony whatever other antecedents it might have. This distinctively romantic trait, the constant transcendence of every solution, of every concretion of an ideal, is amply evident in Hesse and serves as a nearly infallible guide to interpreting his work, especially in warning the interpreter away from absolutizing any one apparent Hessean solution. Satisfaction and a final resting place remain as illusive and beyond the horizon as the primal mother.

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[20] Mark Boulby, Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967), p. 207.

Some Judgments on Hesse's Romanticism

If Romantic Irony is as operative in Hesse's work--from *Peter Camenzind* to *Magister Ludi*--as appears to be the case, then some of the credit for his lasting openness to new solutions for the problem of the self goes to romanticism. Romanticism tends to see the perfect state or existence or a better order of things in the past, as in Walter Scott, or in the future, in what is yet to come. Hesse largely shares this last trait and it leaves him open, makes the full history of his work dynamic in character rather than static. Such availability for the new, what is to come, leaves Hesse more receptive than a more rationalist classicist might be to both transcendent forces and to chaotic subterranean powers. A final evaluation of this will wait till the conclusion of this work.

With age there is a slight diminution in Hesse's work of the *Ich*-concern which dominates most of the works. Nevertheless, even in such a classical appearing work as *Magister Ludi* there is reason to think that the ego remains central. This may be, ultimately, a crippling limitation in Hesse though it is hard to think of his work having the impact it does were its emphasis diffused to other concerns. In any case, many of his heroes, most of them, show an inability to really escape the self or, more positively, to give the self in love to another. Service, the ideal nearest to self-giving love in a few of the novels, itself seems to be service to ideal or the spirit, something fairly abstract, rather than to another person. Obviously Hesse's heroes are not egocentric boors--it would be impossible to understand their attraction for so many if this were so--yet they rarely succeed or make the effort needed to put their centers unequivocally in something or someone outside themselves.

The "dissolution of traditional ethics" which Tillich sees as often characteristic of romanticism may, indeed, be verified in Hesse's work. In Demian, somewhat of an exception however, traditional ethics are positively rejected, scrapped; elsewhere the ethical concern merely recedes into the background or completely fades out of the picture. This may be attributable to Hesse's immersion in Eastern thought where the accent is religious or aesthetic, i.e., on union with the Absolute, over against the more ethical concern, i.e., with behavior, of Western thought. More often than not in Hesse the ideal of some universal harmony is to the fore and such distinctions as that between good and evil are definitely ignored or by-passed. In view of Hesse's own religious background and that of many of his readers, it may be assumed, this transcending of the ethical is perhaps not primarily a fault but a gain. If any value is to be given to contemporary ethics and contemporary psychology then a concentration on self-realization, personal integration, personality-development, are all to be preferred to the reiteration of collections of prohibitions and commands.

C. Eastern Religion Thought

German writers and thinkers, especially the romantics--all flourishing in the century immediately prior to Hesse's birth and in his youth--were among the first Europeans to mine some of the wealth of Eastern thought. Writers with whose work and thought he was most familiar are among the European heralds of Eastern thought, e.g., Goethe,

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Friedrich, Schlegel, Görres, Novalis, Herder and Schopenhauer. The latter especially acquired from Buddhism some ammunition to use against the typically Western notion of *personal* immortality and from Eastern thought in general some support for his pessimism about existence (Mileck, page 73).

Nevertheless, apart from what may be Hesse's indebtedness to romanticism for knowledge of Eastern philosophical and religious thought, there is much right in Hesse's home and youth to account for the interest and acquaintance. Reference has been made elsewhere to the background of Hesse's parents and grandparents, especially on his mother's side, in the Indian missions. This was not merely the unavoidable influence that Eastern thought would have on someone living for a time in the East. Along with it went much activity productive of more intimate acquaintance with the culture. Grandfather Hermann Gundert was active in translating the Bible into Indian dialects, preaching in several Indian languages and collecting Malajalam songs (See Mileck, page 4, or Ball, pages 168-169). The last project is probably quite influential in the actual form of the prose in *Siddhartha* (Ball, page 175). Hesse mentions learning a love for Krishna at home.[21] And, a few years after the first German translation of Lao Tzu, Hesse's father, in 1914, published a brochure entitled "Laotse, ein vorchistlicher Wahrheitszeuge" (Ball, page 172). By this time evidence of Hesse's Chinese studies began to appear in his works; these studies were to include a favorite of his, the

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[21] Miguel Serrano, *Jung and Hermann Hesse*, trans. Frank MacShane (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), p. 24.

I Ching (Ball, page 173).

As is the case with romanticism and Pietism, the Eastern influences surrounding Hesse in his childhood were vital to his development and never really forgotten. Boulby translates some of Hesse's comments on his family background:

> I experienced religion in two forms, as the child and grandchild of pious upright Protestants and as a reader of Indian revelation in which I give pride of place to the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita and the sermons of Buddha . . . From early childhood I lived just as much in the atmosphere of Indian spirituality as I did in that of Christianity (page 122).

He took steps to abet this influence when in 1911 he made his only trip to the Orient, to Malaya, Sumatra and Ceylon, apparently not to India proper or to China. The reality of life in the Orient did not appeal to him while its thought exercised an influence all his life. When all this is said, it still should not be forgotten that Western influences, German, romantic, Pietistic, all maintained their strong force in his life and thought; even an Asiatic character such as Siddhartha is still Hermann Hesse on his constant quest for self-understanding and self-realization. He used Eastern thought eclectically and incorporated it into an essentially Western philosophical and religious edifice.

Because of the virtual disappearance of Buddhism in India Hindu influences would be most apparent in the background of Hesse's family. Buddhist influence would come more particularly through Hesse's own studies and through the romantics. The two, of course, share some basic concepts such as karma and reincarnation. The influence of both Hinduism and Buddhism is apparent in the works being studied here. With age Chinese thought exercised more influence and attraction for Hesse. Siddhartha telescopes much of Hesse's interest in Eastern thought. Its hero passes from Hindu Brahmanism to some contact with the Buddha and his teaching only to accept finally a Taoist solution. And it has been pointed out a number of times that the serene, harmonizing and balancing spirit of the last major work, Magister Ludi, is essentially of Chinese origin. Hesse has acknowledged his indebtedness at various times; e.g., to Miguel Serrano: "I have been more inspired by the wisdom of China than by the Upanishads or the Vedanta. . ." (Serrano, page 10). (See also Mileck, page 74.)

Without attempting to track down or record every reference to karma or the I Ching the Oriental influence in Hesse's work can be broadly summed up under several headings: 1) reincarnation; 2) the notion of God; 3) the self; 4) meditation and spiritual discipline; 5) the reconciliation of opposites. These will be most briefly amplified here. Further exemplification of what is said here can be found in the treatment of specific novels.

1) Reincarnation. The Hindu and Buddhist doctrine of transmigration of souls, reincarnation or metempsychosis intrigued Hesse both in itself and with its possibilities. He valued it in part as a solution to the problem of the realization of the self for which one life-time often seems so inadequate. Just to become a true man, a full human, or to realize the various selves potential

within one would require more than one lifetime.[22] In Steppenwolf the idea of successive realizations of the self is transposed from afterlife into this life; i.e., it is suggested that the individual, through great resiliency, might within one lifetime be able to rearrange the elements of his personality in a number of different patterns, thus achieving, here and now, a number of disparate existences or realizations of the self.

Again, all this about successive realizations of the self is not unambiguously Eastern. Romantic Irony likewise calls for such perpetual transcendence of the form of any one moment of life as is noted elsewhere.

2) The notion of God. Siddhartha and Steppenwolf particularly point toward an image of God much like that of Brahman (the All) in being both impersonal and embracing all that is. At times too the human soul or person is spoken of as atman, a spark from and of Brahman. God rarely, if at all, has the personal characteristics he has in much Christian tradition and piety. Rather he underlies and embraces all that is in his own existence. Mayer calls the attitude theopanist--God is all--rather than pantheist--all is God (Mayer 43ff). While this distinguishes Hesse's notion from pantheism, the theopanist alternative still identifies God and the world more than the traditional Christian view which sees God present in everything by his "presence, power and substance" (Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I, Q. 8).

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[22] Gerhart Mayer, Die Begegnung des Christentums mit den asiastischen Religionen im Werk Hermann Hesses (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid Verlag, 1956), p. 151.

Hesse's God is explicitly distinguished by the author or his heroes from the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Especially in Demian Yahweh is faulted with a masculine tendency to distinguish and separate unlike Abraxas, the Gnostic god, who embraces good and evil. Implicitly too Yahweh is frequently replaced in the novels, at least for all practical purposes, by the Great Mother who, like Abraxas, integrates all disparities and opposites in herself.

3) The self. The notion of the self varies throughout Hesse's work since his whole drive is to understand it and its destiny. He tries varying conceptions of the self and some of these are drawn from the East, possibly most of them, e.g., the Samkhya-Yoga notion which seems so evident in Demian. While not exclusively Eastern, the idea of the two selves can be considered Hindu: the superficial, empirical self on the one hand and the true, real self (atman) on the other, identical ultimately with Brahman.[23] Much of the striving of Hesse's heroes is a matter of attempting to peal away the false self and uncover the true self.

At times, as in Steppenwolf, the self and its reunion with Brahman seem mingled with a Western concept of the self and its immortality. Elsewhere in the same book the self is treated as an illusion, something to be gotten over entirely, a notion certainly similar to the Buddhist idea of Anatta, no-self.

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[23] Cf. Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1961), pp. 64 and 67; Thomas Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite (New York: New Directions, 1968), pp. 26, 74 and 128.

4) Meditation and spiritual discipline. Siddhartha like Buddha rejected the severe ascetical discipline of the Hindu holy men but did himself practice meditation and concentration on mantras such as Om. He also approvingly practices reflection on the lessons of the river as instructed to do by Vasudeva, the ferryman. In Magister Ludi Yoga itself comes in for commendation in one of the three stories appended to the narrative and a kind of secularized Yoga and meditation are an important part of Castalian life. One of the Music Master's great services to Knecht is teaching him to meditate. The Bead Game itself, while resembling in some ways a computer, also involves a very contemplative assimilation of culture. In the same novel, while reservations are expressed about the value of a purely contemplative life, i.e., one lacking external works, part of Designori's spiritual restoration involves a return to long-forgotten practices of meditation and breathing exercises. The latter also figure in Harry Haller's higher ideal for himself.

5) Reconciliation of opposites. Admittedly this theme does have a history in the West in the Gnostics, Nicholas of Cusa and the romantics, yet in general Western thought has been more prone to distinguish good and evil, God and man, etc., in accord with its Judaic background. The ideal of reconciling opposites in some superior synthesis haunts Hesse in his major novels. Various symbols all the way from the Bead Game itself to the more frequently met hermaphrodite or great mother express or embody this ideal for him and here he is at one with much Eastern thought. He seems to be implicitly accepting the Eastern conception of religion as primarily

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a means to union and reunion of disparate elements over against the more moralistic ideal of religions of the Judaic stream. Reference is made elsewhere to specific parallels in Eastern religion to Hesse's all-embracing Urmutter.

6) Man's relation to the world around him. More than any of the other novels Siddhartha exhibits a conception of man's place in nature, in the world around him, which seems undeniably Eastern, Taoist specifically. But the major novels, Demian, Steppenwolf, Narcissus and Goldmund and Journey to the East, all manifest a sense of the necessity of some harmony of man with the rhythms of nature which, until recently, has not been recognized generally in the West as very urgent. This linking of man's individual and personal destiny and fulfillment to the non-human world around his is, of course, also characteristic of romanticism. And, too, while it may be alien to much recent Western civilization it has its strong echoes in Christian tradition. The first novel treated in this dissertation, Peter Camenzind, reflects that tradition in its most familiar and buoyant form, St. Francis of Assisi. With him Peter addresses the elements around him as brother and sister. So again, as in other instances above, the source of this, Hesse's appreciation of man's place in nature, is not simply or easily pinpointed.

Eastern philosophy and religion have obviously left a strong impress on Hesse's mind and work. A work like Siddhartha would, of course, be inconceivable apart from it and the influence is clear, if sporadic, in the other works. His life and literary history is as much a journey to the East, a quest for its wisdom and light on human life and destiny, as it is a journey toward the mother and, indeed, the two goals merge in great part. Unquestionably, whatever qualifications are made, the influence of the East on Hesse's thought and writing is strong and abiding. In view of the coincidence of some of the teachings of the East with the wisdom of the West with which Hesse was very familiar, it remains impossible to distinguish clearly their claims on Hesse's allegiance. It will be apparent in this treatment of the ten novels that this writer thinks with others, such as Joseph Mileck, that Hesse remains fundamentally a Westerner, the heir and debtor of Christianity, specifically Pietism, and of European culture. Much of his eclectic use of Eastern categories and practices was experimental, leaving Hesse with a return often to the more familiar tradition of the West.

Life in an intellectual and solidly Pietist family with the accompanying influences accounts for the various experiments Hesse makes regarding the realization of the self in his novels. These experimental approaches are the subject matter of chapters two, three and four which treat ten of Hesse's novels in chronological order. The consideration of each novel will be prefaced by a brief summary of the story. Following this in each case will be the writer's analysis of how Hesse faces the issue of the self in the particular work. Chapter five presents a summary of the analyses and a critique of Hesse's implicit theological anthropology.

CHAPTER II

The Novels of the First Period of Hesse's Life

I. Peter Camenzind

Summary

Peter Camenzind is a schoolboy in an alpine village who is gifted with "unusual physical strength and an equally strong disinclination to work." Early in the story his mother dies. (Hesse's own mother died in 1902.) Recognized by the local monks for intellectual gifts, he eagerly accepts the opportunity of getting away from the little town of Nimikon to study philology in the city. While philology may have seemed to promise a wider world than Nimikon, once he compares it with the freer and broader possibilities of urban culture it appears constricting. In early manhood by this time, Camenzind finds he has some talent for writing and embarks on a moderately successful career as a journalist and essayist. His affective nature expresses itself in a deep friendship (Richard) and several love affairs (Erminia and Elizabeth especially) which, for various reasons, are cut short before they really bloom. He also has strong attachments to St. Francis of Assisi and along with this, to much of nature, to the city of Florence and to wine. All but the last he shares with his friend Richard, a handsome, light-hearted type; their idyll ends when Richard accidentally drowns. Camenzind sees that his love for nature and his passionate love for a few friends must be augmented by a more unselfish love for others and this he exercises by taking in and caring for Boppi, an unappealing hunchback. But Boppi too dies. His earlier loves for women and Richard had been dashed each time by circumstances and each time had led to a reaction of some bitterness or dissipation. The death of Boppi leads him to some concern for his old father and he returns to Nimikon to care for him. The reader is left to suspect that Peter will become a fairly satisfied and indistinguishable villager himself, probably an innkeeper of few ambitions and manageable desires.

Peter Camenzind is unavoidably lost, disaffiliated, alienated no matter where he is, a "poet, wanderer, drunkard, lone wolf."[1] Characters of this type are a consistent part of the Hessean landscape, even though the example given in Camenzind is inchoate even in his lostness. The hero, Camenzind, seeks whatever it is he is looking for ("the goal of my dreams--some great fortune, a completion of myself"), first in leaving Nimikon to study or write.(page 83). Progressing he seeks it in love or friendship or in loving service of someone else after the model of his favorite, St. Francis of Assisi. None of these efforts is really allowed to prove itself conclusively deceptive, misleading or incapable of fulfilling him for each is ended by accident or some quirk of fate. Possibly the writer, in his mid-twenties at the time, felt too lacking in experience to ascribe to anyone of these the power to really fulfill, a power which seems potential but is never able to come to actuality. Or, the writer was convinced that none of these is able to really satisfy that, in the tragic-romantic manner, they all inevitably turn to ashes before fulfillment is realized. "I did not know yet that I suffered from a longing which neither love nor fame can satisfy" (pages 83, 84). The atmosphere of the novel certainly reflects the romantic attitude of bitter-sweet retrospection at life.

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[1] Hermann Hesse, Peter Camenzind, trans. Michael Roloff (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), p. 125. References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 125). The original German of this novel and of the others considered in this dissertation is found in Gesammelte Schriften, 7 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1957). Peter Camenzind is found in volume i. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, i, page 136).

Typical as this novel is of Hesse's life-long sense of alienation, it also testifies to the more positive aspect of his personal concern, his quest for a path through life that would be satisfying and reasonably fulfilling of life's potential, of the person's potential. The return to Nimikon at the end seems to say that, at least in this case, this fulfillment is not realized. Camenzind ceases to make the effort, resigns himself to his inability to escape the lot of his ancestors in the little village and without passionate resistance accepts this return to origins. Prophetically he is told early in his excursion in to the world: "You'd end up like your father" (page 70) and "You should have stayed a farmer" (page 76). In disputing an interpretation by Johanna Kunze professor Mileck says of the novel and two other early Hesse works:

> Instead of marking the futility of knowledge, discipline, and will in his quest for the self, Camenzind, Gertrud and Rosshalde reflect Hesse's inability to excape from himself in his attempted reconciliation with life at large (Mileck, page 77).

The hero in Camenzind seeks the unique door or window on reality that will allow the self to escape from itself. He tries various doors only to find them too difficult to open fully or slammed prematurely--almost on his fingers. Oscar Seidlin sees Hesse's tales as "myths which record the process of awakening to the self" and in the light of this sees Peter Camenzind and Hans Giebenrath (Beneath the Wheel) "timidly approach the threshold of awakening only to return to the twilight from which they briefly emerged" (Mileck, page 158).

The Role of Nature

Peter Camenzind first attempts to find in nature some key unlocking self-awareness or furthering development. By nature here is understood all those non-human and non-manufactured elements in man's environment perceived and appreciated so regularly by the romantic imagination in poetry and prose. Peter's relationship to nature is largely an emotional, youthful one, a feeling at times of great affinity. The book opens with the mountains and lakes of Peter's native alpine home in view: these and other elements of his surroundings are personified:

> These mountains proclaim a message that is easy to understand. . . . We have suffered most brutally. . . . But they say it proudly, sternly, and with clenched teeth. . . . It was the sight of the trees, however, that affected me most deeply. I saw each tree leading a life of its own, formed in its own particular shape, casting its own individual shadow. . . . Each had to bear its own burden and cling desperately. . . . Our men and women resembled these trees. They were hard, stern, and close-lipped. . . . (pages 2, 3).

And:

> Mountains, lake, storm, and sun were my companions. They told me stories, molded me, and were dearer to me for many years than any person or any person's fate (page 14).

Nature serves as an object of love to the young boy and young man, a surrogate for as yet unawakened human relationship and loves, and a refuge and confidant when human relationships begin to develop. E. g., after some slight encouragement from an early love, Erminia, Peter repairs to a hill and feels his passion echoed in nature:

> Like the wind that caressed and shook and bent the fruit trees and the black crowns of the chestnut trees and made them moan, laugh, and quiver, so my passion played within me. . . . I knelt and groveled on the ground, . . . buried my face in the grass, grasped the tree trunks. . . . (page 69).

Besides affinity to nature, Camenzind also expresses, with minimal development, an awareness of a stronger sentiment, man's oneness with nature. Though the feeling for nature evident throughout the book is diffuse and at times so all inclusive as to be difficult to define, the idea of oneness with nature is clearly present. Thus the text on pages 145-147 goes from a reminder that man is "part of the cosmos," not primarily its lord, to a simple reflection on the vitality and life we might find in more attention to nature, to the suggestion of man's brotherhood with all that is, including even sorrow and death. All this originally comes to Camenzind bereft of much if any reference to men and this he sees as a defect (page 147). He ironically refers to the notion of man as "crowning glory of nature" and attributes to nature an ability to communicate to us God's thought (page 118).

The narrator, Peter, recognizes in his relation to nature limitations which need to be made up for or supplemented by human relationships. With some awareness of how strange it all may seem to the sober man on the street, Camenzind tells us of his "tenderness, devotion and sympathy" for mute nature which were such that at times he would leave his bed at night to console a tree that he imagined to be suffering from neglect. "This may have been mistaken," he admits, "yet it was not wasted. The only question was how I would find my way from a love of nature to love of mankind" (page 123). A period of "ghastly loneliness" helps confirm a reservation about nature he has already touched on: in his sadness and lostness, "The meadows, trees, and fields were silent" (page 101).

Relations are somewhat one-sided.

Summarily, nature in Peter Camenzind, though loved and appreciated at a level above that of the ordinary nature-lover, is incapable of responding adequately or of interacting with Peter enough to aid much in his self-discovery. In this connection and in passing, it maybe noted that while nature's inability to respond more humanly does distress him, he is, on the other hand, tempted to exist on nature's own level. The clouds, among his favorites in all of nature, symbolize the life of a wanderer or voyager who drifts freely with the wind, unburdened by the cares and worries he glimpses in the complexities of an adult human life (page 14).

The Place of Society

If nature, on close scrutiny, is discovered to be insufficiently responsive to her human suitors, society (men in their social relations and cultural pursuits), on the other hand, leaves Peter unresponsive and indifferent, no matter how much it might seek to engage him.

Though his thought is not without equivocation, Camenzind seems to be more opposed to and out of rapport with the society he lives in, (an urban culture), than necessarily with all society. There is this rather inconclusive passage regarding a trip to Italy from Switzerland where he is living and working:

> I did not realize the ridiculous shabbiness of modern culture until I set foot in Florence. In Florence I began to sense that *I would be a stranger in society for the rest of my life*, and the desire was born in me to lead my life outside this society, preferably in the south. *I did not feel a stranger among people there*. . . . (Italics mine) (pages 94-95).

That his quarrel is essentially with contemporary city culture is apparent too in his assertion, near the end of the book:

> No amount of art will transform a Camenzind from Nimikon into a city dweller. . . . I am glad that my clumsy pursuit of luck has led me back, against my will, to the old nook between lake and mountain where I started. . . . In the world outside I had forgotten what it was like at home and had come very near to regarding myself as some rare and remarkable bird. Now I saw once again that it was merely the spirit of Nimikon spooking about inside me, unable to adjust to the customs of the rest of the world (page 197).

Apart from the suggestion that he could live in and appreciate a society different from modern urban society, Camenzind still has reservations about the relevance of society to an individual's needs, to his vague striving for self-discovery or self-development. Struggles for social betterment, for peace, for a more equal economy, for culture:

> All these endeavors were imbued with vigor and movement; yet none of them mattered to me. It would have made no difference to me or the kind of life I led if any or all of these objectives had been achieved (page 106).

He had enought interest to find out what others are striving for but remains detached from either side of most issues. He faults both society and himself for insufficient interest in what should be prior:

> I discovered that in most cases the intellectual fervor was directed at analyzing the conditions and structure of society and the state, at the sciences, the arts, and at teaching methods. Yet only a small minority seemed aware of the need to develop their own selves and to clarify their personal relationship to time and eternity. And in my case, the awareness of this need was not very great at that time (Italics mine.) (page 56).

Camenzind shares a common enough state of affairs: a strong criticism of men and society around him coupled with a weak determination to live or act differently. This indecisiveness is typical of Peter Camenzind. Significantly, though, already discernible is the beginning of Hesse's life-long preoccupations which will be brought to clearer consciousness later and receive much fuller development.

Love of God and Man

Camenzind's moderate success in writing brings him some intelligent acquaintances who impress him "by the fervor with which these souls longed for some form of redemption" (page 84). His description of their assorted efforts are remarkably contemporary:

> Though belief in God was considered foolish, almost in bad taste, people believed in names like Schopenhauer, Buddha, Zarathustra, and many others. There were young unknown poets who performed solemn rites before statues and paintings in fashionably furnished apartments. They would have been ashamed to do so before God, but they knelt down before the Zeus of Otricoli. There were miserably dressed ascetics who tortured themselves with abstinence; their god's name was either Buddha or Tolstoy. There were artists who, by resorting to wallpaper in carefully selected color schemes, to music, food, wines, perfumes, or cigars, induced states of extraordinary and unusual excitement in themselves. They discoursed easily and with affected naturalness about musical lines, color congruences, and similar matters and were always looking for the personal touch, which generally consisted of some small, harmless self-deception or quirk (page 84).

On a visit to Italy Camenzind is regarded as a "good Catholic" (page 133), yet in his own evaluation it seems evident that, though he does not consider belief in God "foolish," it is still a receding belief in his soul with only an occasional disturbing echo. After losing in love and friendship, he says:

> I had believed in friendship, in the love of women, and in youth. Now that one after the other had left me, why did I not put my trust in God (page 97)?

Yet the thought dies away almost as soon as it is born. Elsewhere he speaks momentarily of "the longing of the divine within us" (page 120) which art seeks to express. Of more practical import and lasting efficacy is God's voice in his conscience. Shortly after his carpenter friend somewhat reluctantly accepts Boppi, his wife's misshapen brother, into the household, Camenzind and the members of the family, except for Boppi, go off for a Sunday afternoon leaving the cripple at home, locked in. Boppi, by the way, interestingly replaces Aggie, the carpenter's lovely little daughter who had died shortly before; in Camenzind's life he replaces also the more personable friends and loves who have all disappeared from his life in one way or another. Both the carpenter and Camenzind resent the intrusion of this deformed bit of humanity into their lives and are vexed in a subdued way by this and by their own reaction to it. While they are off on their outing this Sunday afternoon, the thought of Boppi unattended and unloved prods Camenzind. His oft-proclaimed love of St. Francis of Assisi whose love was not limited to those pleasing to him rebukes him and he hears God speak to him:

> You love a household where people treat you well and where you spend many happy hours. And the day I grace this house with my presence, you run off and scheme to drive me out!. You saint, you prophet, you poet (page 165)!

This surely echoes a very traditional and orthodox Christian piety.[2] The rebuke to his romantic but ineffectual love of men gets to his heart: he runs back to check on Boppi and shortly after takes Boppi into his own home and cares for him in a Franciscan way till his death. Whatever be the value and feasibility of this kind of service for society's larger problems, it does here provide Camenzind with the most satisfying and worthwhile moments of his life. This too, like every other love in his life, is short-lived and ended by Boppi's death. The voice of conscience brings the seeker, in this brief interlude, to a practical implementation of the decidedly Christian belief that sincere love of God is impossible without love of men, especially of the afflicted and suffering in whom he is present a particular way.

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[2] 1904, the year that saw the publication of Peter Camenzind also produced, significantly, Hesse's study of St. Francis of Assisi.

Implicit though only slightly developed is the idea that love, the love of a woman or friendship, has in it all that is required for the fulfillment of a man's potential. Coupled with this is the hard fact of the rare conjunction of all the desiderata for a satisfying, perfect love. E. g., Camenzind loves Erminia but she ultimately tells him she is in love with another man (he, by the way, married to another); Camenzind loves Richard but Richard drowns; he also loves Elizabeth only to find that she is engaged to someone else; Signora Nardini loves Camenzind but he can't quite reciprocate; Boppi is given to him to love by a mixture of fate and conscience and while he loves Boppi, the latter is unable to provide the other elements of love that could have been present in Erminia, Elizabeth or Richard. So love may be the answer. But whoever finds it and keeps it?--seems to be an important question stated in Peter Camenzind. There are a number of other points regarding love which have a bearing on this study. Some deserve mention here of themselves; others receive fuller development elsewhere.

1) Love's contradictory or oppositional attributes all harry the young Camenzind. Usually, Hesse's women and the love of women are

presented in an aura of "ethereal asexuality" as Theodore Roszak well says.[3] Camenzind describes his own attitude toward a girl or woman he is drawn to in terms of veneration, worship, as of a goddess to whom he would bring hard-won gifts and eternal fealty. It is so ethereal, in fact, that one would think it would repulse most contemporary readers, hardened as they are by more earthy presentations. He seems to regard ideal love or true love as "dispassionate" (page 121), which again suggests a rather disembodied notion of love. Yet, along with the foregoing Camenzind describes himself, once more settled in Nimikon, as beset by "fervent springtime battles," "love sickness;" "passion" possesses him "horribly and irresistibly" (pages 191-192). 2) Expectedly in so romantic a work, the characters resignedly and with some pleasure, in fact, see love as entailing suffering. Erminia: "Oh, love isn't there to make us happy. I believe it exists to show us how much we can endure" (page 75). Hesse was to leave behind within a few years such cloying romanticism. Camenzind himself expresses it later:

> That's the way it is when you love. It makes you suffer, and I have suffered much in the years since. But it matters little that you suffer, so long as you feel alive with a sense of the close bond that connects all living things, so long as love does not die! I would gladly exchange every happy day of my life, all my infatuations and great plans, provided I could exchange them for gazing deeply once more into this most sacred experience. It bitterly hurts your eyes and heart, and your pride and self-esteem don't get off scot-free either, but afterwards you feel so calm and serene, so much wiser and alive (page 182).

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[3] Theordore Roszak, The Making of a Counter Culture (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 135.

Here the notion has more depth and reality as he takes suffering to be empirical evidence of care, of spending oneself on the beloved. This in turn makes life worthwhile, contributes to one's growth.

3) Friendship--the love of persons of the same sex for each other--is, if a particular passage in the novel is taken literally, superior even to love as delineated above.

> Nobler and more rewarding than fame, wine, love, and wisdom was friendship. It alone stirred me out of my inborn sluggishness and kept my youth unspoiled and fresh as the dawn. Even today I know of nothing more delicious than an honest and forthright friendship between two men, and if something like homesickness for my youth overcomes me during periods of reflection, I think back upon nothing with as much longing as my student friendships (page 86).

Camenzind's friendship with Richard stimulates the preceding declaration. But the text quoted touches on something which will remain a constant in Hesse's books to the very last, a very high evaluation of such friendship--and there are numerous examples of very close friends in the subsequent works. Since relationships of this type that recur so often are hardly what one would term overt, active homosexuality (there is only the slightest suggestion of this in an instance or two in later works), they fortify the remarks about the somewhat disembodied, "ethereal" character of love in the novels. There is a sort of indifference to the gender of the person loved which which is quite unlike the loud heterosexuality of much twentieth century fiction.

The More Explicit Quest of the Self

The elements of Camenzind thus far exposed are related to the broad problem of self-realization or self-completion in Hesse. There is some initial attention to the narrower aspects of this question too. Almost as if he were just beginning to enter the layers that form the "onion" that is man, our hero here--and Hesse it may be presumed--sees all men distinguished from nature around them "by a slippery, protective envelope of illusions and lies" (page 148). These illusions are built up so early, in childhood even, that men are inclined to take them for the real self; they substitute, at least, for the real self which few trouble to know. For himself Camenzind is convinced of the existence or the potential of a real self but feels that thus far he has let himself be determined by chance, by fate: "My life still lacked a deep individual melody of its own" (page 83). This conviction of the presence of an immovable external fate surrounding one is common to these first novels. Only later is fate interiorized and subjected to human will.

This conviction of the possibility of an individual melody of his own and in others shows itself in his admiration for Uncle Konrad, an atypical villager of eccentric and wild dreams and schemes. At the end of the book, back in Nimikon, he imagines himself eulogizing Uncle Konrad at his funeral and directing acidulous remarks at the other villagers, presumably for their unadventuresome, confined lives and thought. He himself has decided to settle down in Nimikon with the implication that he might just end up his life like the ordinary villager. But there are suggestions of other possibilities:

> Perhaps a time will come when I'll start all over again and see it through to the end. In that case, the yearning of my youth will be proved right, and I will turn out to be a poet after all (page 201).

Earlier it was pointed out that part of the great attraction of nature for Camenzind lies in its apparent freedom from the anxieties, the oppressive and chilling demands of adult life as he sees it lived around him. Especially does he see in the clouds apt symbols of the way he would like to voyage through or over life. He also weighs the possibility of an escape from life's demands or a refusal of them through other means. Particular failures propel him to one form of escape:

> The misery of unrequited love accomplished what had been beyond my father's powers. It made me into a hardened drinker, and the effect of drink on my life has been more lasting than anything I have described so far. . . . The strong sweet god of wine. . . . He can do the impossible; he imbues impoverished hearts with poetry. He transformed me, a peasant and a recluse, into a king, a poet, and a sage. He fills the emptied vessels of life with new destinies and drives the stranded back into the swift currents of action. . . .
>
> . . . he invites those who are dear to him to feast and builds them rainbow bridges to blissful isles. Then they are weary, he cushions their heads; he embraces and comforts them like a mother when they become melancholy. . . .
>
> The known world shrinks and vanishes, and the soul hurls itself with fear and joy into the uncharted distances of the unknown where everything is strange and yet familiar. . . . (pages 79, 80).

Drink, if no solution, is at least a refuge and is ultimately given a place in young Camenzind's Franciscan song of praise as "my dear brother, wine" (page 122).

More desperately and like many a future Hesse hero and like Hesse himself in his youth, Camenzind thinks of suicide. After a particularly useless and dissipated time in Paris which he largely veils as too sordid, he muses:

> One evening as I sat in the Bois de Boulogne, wondering whether to have done with Paris or even with life itself, I reviewed my entire existence for the first time in years and reached the conclusion that I had little to lose by suicide (pages 99, 100).

But a more accepting mood prevails and he judges the time of death something better left to death itself which then receives the usual accolade: "death is our wise and good brother. . . ." (page 100).

So, as it is, drink is kept as a handy refuge and escape and suicide is ruled out. However, they are related to what is the final note of the story: Camenzind returns to Nimikon, for now at least through with his efforts to discover himself or to enter life in the broader world, resigned to whatever life in the small village may bring. Thus far, in this first novel, Hesse's hero is still struggling to be freed of environmental and traditional limitations. Premonitions of something more positive such as "his own melody" enter his consciousness but only to tease, not to bear any fruit now. The hero makes exploratory forays into the outside world in Peter Camenzind but consistently is forced to retreat, beginning again surely but making no great progress.

II. Beneath the Wheel

Summary

The protagonist of this novel, as of the previous, is a young boy. Hans Giebenrath, whose history, however, does not get beyond his late adolescence. His origins are in a Swabian Black Forest village. Hans is the candidate of the village for the stiff state exams which open the way to an education designed ultimately to lead to a post as a state-supported pastor. Hans is intensively and oppressively drilled to enable him to pass the all-important exams--to the point of physical and mental strain. He passes the exam and looks forward to a relaxing summer of fishing prior to entering the academy, Maulbronn. Pastor and principal in their eagerness to have him succeed soon effectively destroy Hans' relaxation with special preparatory sessions in Greek, Homer and mathematics all through the summer. By the time he leaves for Maulbronn he is further exhausted.

Life at the boys' boarding school in the former Cistercian monastery is full enough of drama. Hans begins his career as an academic drudge but develops a deep friendship with Hermann Heilner, a brilliant poet type, an apostle of instinct and life vis-a-vis discipline, system, and pedestrian study. Heilner gets into trouble and is punished, largely by a sort of isolation from the others. Hans too, somewhat shamefacedly, forsakes Heilner. But after a fellow student drowns in a pond he resumes his friendship with Heilner despite official objections and his studies began to decline. A number of factors seem to have prepared the way for Hans' ultimate breakdown at the school: his over-study earlier, the emotional stress of his friendship with Heilner, the rigidity of the school authorities and Heilner's eventual running-away from the school.

Ill and back home, Hans is no longer of much interest to pastor and school master and is a worry to his father who thinks Hans may be losing his mind. Hans has a momentary flirtation with a girl and starts work as a machinist's apprentice. The first weekend after starting this work he goes off on a spree with a few of the fellows, ends up drunk and wanders homeward by himself. He never makes it and his body is found in a stream. Finally, he has been broken under the wheel. Flaig, a Pietist shoemaker from the village who had earlier evinced concern over the way Hans was being driven, says to Hans' father at the gravesite, while he points to the schoolmasters: "There you see a couple of gentlemen . . . who helped to put him where he is now."[4]

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[4] Hermann Hesse, Beneath the Wheel, trans. Michael Roloff (new York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968), p. 187. References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 187). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume i. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, i, page 536).

The Educational Background

Beneath the Wheel is a more obvious and single-minded work than Peter Camenzind. Consequently it is not as suggestive of as many later Hessean themes as was Peter Camenzind and carries the theme of this study only a little farther. The delineation of the schoolboy friendship of Hans and Hermann is moving and well done. But, like the other three of the first four novels, the story itself is marred by some sentimentality and marked by a mixture of psychological improbability and psychological insight.[5]

In Beneath the Wheel our hero again is a young boy. The story basically tells how this boy, of good mind, is brutally and unthinkingly crushed by the bourgeois ambitions of his father and the narrow concerns of the pastor and schoolmaster for his academic success. He is literally "fed" into the system, then operating in Germany, which made the route of the ministerial school the main escape for poor boys from the village grind. Hesse hammers one-sidedly and consistently on this way of drying up and destroying a young life. The somewhat heavy-handed approach and the object of the attack are both typical of many a Bildungsroman (novel of education) in the wider category of Schulliteratur (school-literature) which prospered in Germany from 1890 till World War I. A succinct description of this literature is given in Mark Boulby's well-researched paragraphs:

> The school novel proper deals primarily with the clash between the child and the formal educational system, and in

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[5] For an easily available criticism of this work, see Mark Boulby's Hermann Hesse, His Mind and Art, especially pages 44 through 48. Boulby notes such defects as lack of subtlety, blatancy of approach, crude depiction of uncongenial characters, etc. Hesse, twenty-nine at the time, was writing much, poetry and essays especially.

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> this it was very topical, since the last twenty years of the nineteenth century disclose an ever-increasing agitation in Germany for the reform of the high schools. At the back of a good deal of the controversy lay an unspoken question . . .: did the German school system, with its quasimilitary ethos and discipline, its long school day, and its premium upon intellectual attainment and hard work, not perhaps do irreparable harm to the emotional life of its charges? or did it not, at the very least, transform them into Nietzsche's execrated cultural Philistine (Bildungsphilister) (page 40)?

Boubly quotes a particularly strong attack on the system by Julius Langbehn in 1890. Langbehn pleaded for a more central position for the aesthetic experience over against intellectual knowledge, for the "fullest possible exploitation of his (the student's) own deepest nature," for less nationalization of the student's soul, for a repudiation of "useless knowledge and a false moral outlook." (Boulby, pp. 40, 41). Writing of the reforms that were being called for, Boulby says in a footnote:

> The concern was the modernization of the traditional curriculum, still largely based upon the study of the classical languages and mathematics. At a conference held in Berlin in December 1890 the emperor himself delivered an address urging reform, pointing out that the high schools existed to educate Germans, not Romans and Greeks (Boulby, 40, footnote 3).

The inner character or ideal of such a system is well suggested by the names of the rooms in which the students at Maulbronn studied: Forum, Hellas, Athens, Sparta, Acropolis (pages 62, 63).

The route Hans Giebenrath is forced to follow in this atmosphere is revealed for all its inhumaneness and narrowness in the light of Hesse's inplicit and growing understanding of what would make for the development and expansion of the human person.

The German educational system described here was familiar to Hesse from his own experience--and that of his younger brother Johannes called Hans--in it before the end of the last century and, in fact, many details are faithful to what is known of Hesse's own experience (Boubly, page 53). Traditionally this system harbored a strong opposition between itself and the ideal of the individual's self-legitimization ("die Selbstgesetzlichkeit des Einzelnen," Ball, page 84). Historically, Luther was seen as a great example of this opposition and German philosophers and writers, such men as Fichte, Kant, Goethe, Schiller and Herder, promulgated the individual's ideal (Ball, page 84). In the novel Hesse voiced the objections of many of his contemporaries to this very strict, rigid academic discipline imposed on boys with so little regard for the non-intellectual elements in their personalities or for their uniqueness.

Personal Development

In this early novel an already sharp distinction of the bourgeois ideal from that of the artist or any sensitive person is made and a distinction between the intellectual ideal of the school and that of a warmer, more instinctual life. Also clear and important is Hesse's high evaluation of friendship, love between two persons of the same sex, a factor met already in Peter Camenzind. This study will, accordingly, be built around Hesse's ideas on man's development, purpose and realization; in this novel around these three points: 1) the bourgeois ideal over against that of the artist, most broadly defined; 2) the academic ideal over against the freer ideal allowing value to other elements than the rational in man; 3) friendship's place in the person's development. The first two points particularly indicate an attempt at self-definition.

1) The bourgeois and Philistine ideal has been so frequently and universally pictured in the modern novel and by men who were Hesse's contemporaries (e.g., Francois Mauriac in France and Sinclair Lewis in the United States) that one hesitates to bring up another such picture. Yet Hesse may have something of his own to say. Concretely it would be best to start with a description of Hans' father, Joseph Giebenrath (Hans' mother is dead as the story opens):

> Like the majority (of his fellow townsmen), he was endowed with a sturdy and healthy body, a knack for business and an unabashed, heartfelt veneration of money; . . . a more or less enlightened if threadbare attachment to the church, an appropriate respect for God and the authorities, and blind submission to the inflexible laws of bourgeois respectability. . . .
>
> In every respect, his inner life was that of a Philistine. The sensitive side of his personality had long since corroded and now consisted of little more than a traditional rough-and-ready family sense, . . . His intellectual gifts were limited to an inborn canniness and dexterity with figures. . . . He could have exchanged his name and address with any of his neighbors, and nothing would have been different. In common with every other paterfamilias in town, and deeply ingrained in his soul, he also had this: deep-seated distrust of any power or person superior to himself, and animosity toward anyone who was either extra-ordinary or more gifted, sensitive or intelligent than he (pages 3, 4).

"Getting on" in the world, along with money and security, are his primary concerns. From the author's distaste for all this his own ideal can be formulated: less concern about money; more concern about the personal life and less subjection to society and respectability; more sensitivity and broader cultural horizons; openness to and some appreciation of talent.

Hesse adorns or, rather, tarnishes the pride and satisfaction of the boys' parents at the opening ceremony of the school with some sordidly realistic reflections:

> Proud and praiseworthy feelings and high hopes swelled in their breasts and it did not occur to a single one of them that this day he was selling his child for a financial advantage . . . (the student) would be duly sheltered and cared for by the state for the rest of his days. It did not occur to any of the boys, nor to their fathers, that all this would perhaps not really be free (pages 64-65).

For this time of Hesse's life this was a noteworthy but isolated bit of social comment. But the story itself makes clear that the object of Hesse's attack is not so much the government as the repressive school system into which the boys are "sold." In their idolatry of success, wealth and security, the middle class burgers of the story do not see their action as "selling" the boys; their preoccupation makes them blind to this and to other values such as the experience of a genuine childhood, personal freedom, personality and human dignity (page 131).

Closely related to the bourgeois world and its ideals are the ideals of the educational system of the time; together they are important elements in what today would be called "the establishment." Bourgeois ambition is, for all its viciousness, still in the nature of an accomplice to the real villain of Hesse's novel, the narrow, truncated, dessicated educational process.

2) Hesse reflects one of the noblest elements in the romantic tradition in his concern for those other elements in human personality that are not embraced by or subsumed under the category of the rational. Whatever be current critiques of romanticism all are in its debt for this even if other forces also may have nurtured the imaginative, emotional, unconscious and instinctual forces in the

human psyche. In Hermann Heilner--an early example of Hesse's use of his own name and initials for a character who reflects something of himself--an incipiently Nietzschean individual is pictured without the definition or force he will have in Demian. He ridicules the grinds and drudges of academe and evangelizes for the life of the free-spirit. What he champions is a more lawless life with attention to and response to instinct, feeling, nature, passion even, and the ephemeral attributes of youth. Through Heilner, through the picture given of the school and through the effects of too much study on Hans, clearly the undoubtedly single most important point of the novel is made: the dulling, strangling effects of a narrowly rational education and the rigid discipline that accompanies it on the rich and varied potential of a young boy. The results are at first pathetic, in the end tragic. The pathetic:

> . . . this intellectualization of the boy had become noticeable. Deep-set, uneasy eyes glowed dimly in his handsome and delicate face; fine wrinkles, signs of troubled thinking, twitched on his forehead, and his thin, emaciated arms and hands hung at his side with the weary gracefulness reminiscent of a figure by Botticelli (page 8).

The tragic was to come in Hans' premature death.

Almost in caricture style Hesse describes the ideal achievement of a schoolmaster in this system. A deeper element of tragedy is present insofar as the "evil" protagonist, the teacher, is so unaware of the damage he is doing, rather conceiving his work as good. With some irony the author writes:

> It is wrong to say that schoolmasters lack heart and are dried-up, soulless pedants! . . . It is his duty and responsibility to control the raw energies and desires of his charges and replace them with calmer, more moderate ideals. What would many happy citizens and trustworthy

> officials have become but unruly, stormy innovators and dreamers of useless dreams, if not for the effort of their schools? In young beings there is something wild, ungovernable, uncultured which first has to be tamed. . . . Thus it is the school's task to subdue and control man with force and make him a useful member of society, to kindle those qualities in him whose development will bring him to triumphant completion.
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> How well little Giebenrath had come along! He'd given up playing games and running about almost of his own accord, he no longer burst out in stupid laughter during lectures, and he had even let himself be persuaded to abandon his gardening, his rabbits and silly fishing (pages 48-49).

A more ideological and positive statement of Hesse's own ideal, implicit in his ironic portrayal of the teacher's task, could be found in a number of places in Nietzsche[6] and is also given in Hans'

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[6] Nietzsche's "Superman" (Übermensch) ideal has been used to justify German militarism and ruthless oppression of others as with Hitler. And Nietzsche's subtlety and most diversified thought is open to such exploitation. Still, consistently in all his railing against dessicated priestly and scholarly ideals he is not only concerned with the unleashing of man's bravery and courage and instinct in conquest and achievement but in balancing the strict rational training of the mind, which he favors, with some place for instinct, emotion, some lightness and freedom. We see the diverse possibilities of Nietzsche's thought in a passage where he rails at the ascetic priest ideal for denying:

> pride, pathos of distance, great responsibility, exuberant spirits, splendid animalism, the instincts of war and of conquest, the deification of passion, revenge, cunning, anger, voluptuousness, adventure, knowledge. . . . (*The Will to Power*, trans. Anthony Ludovici (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1924), i, p. 181.)

He says: "There is no worse confusion than that which confounds rearing and taming." (*The Will to Power*, i, p. 319.) and this is what the *Schullliteratur* so often attacks in the name of freedom for instinct, the *taming* of students in a quasi-military atmosphere.

> Instead of making use of and of *economising* the great sources of passion, those torrents of the soul which are often so dangerous, overwhelming, and impetuous, morality,--this most shortsighted and most corrupted of mental attitudes--would fain make them dry up. (*The Will to Power*, i, p. 307.)

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reflections after his first really serious talk with Heilner:

> What an odd fellow! Hans' worries and desires simply did not exist for him. He had thoughts and words of his own, he lived a richer and freer life, suffered strange ailments and seemed to despise everything around him. He understood the beauty of the ancient columns and walls. And he practiced the mysterious and unusual art of mirroring his soul in verse and of constructing a semblance of life for himself out of his imagination. He was quick and untamable and had more fun in a day than Hans in an entire year. He was melancholy and seemed to relish his own sadness like an unusual condition, alien and delicious (page 76).

The sobriety, self-conscious authority and discipline of Maulbronn had little room for Nietzsche's *joyful wisdom*:

> . . . we must discover the *hero*, and likewise the *fool* that is hidden in our passion for knowledge; we must now and then be joyful in our folly, that we may continue to be joyful in our wisdom! And just because we are heavy and serious men in our ultimate depth, and are rather weights than men, there is nothing that does us so much good as the *fool's cap and bells*: we need them in presence of ourselves--we need all arrogant, soaring, dancing, mocking, childish and blessed Art, in order not to lose the *free dominion over things* which our ideal demands of us. (*Joyful Wisdom*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1964), p. 146.)

Interestingly, in a section of *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche commends Jacob Burckhardt of Basel, much admired by Hesse, as an educator preeminent in "humaneness." Apart from any other such educators, he says:

> What the 'higher schools' in Germany really achieve is a brutal training, designed to prepare huge numbers of young men, with as little loss of time as possible, to become usable, abusable, in government service. (In *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1954), p. 510.)

Romanticism especially lurks in the last line but, aside from that, Hans' musings on his friend repeat the ideal implicit throughout the book.

Heilner's genius or near-genius provides the dramatic foil for the pedestrian and conformist philosophy of the book's educators. The brutality and insensitivity of their efforts vis-a-vis the highly-gifted are brought out in a caustic section of the book:

> Teachers dread nothing so much as unusual characteristics in precocious boys during the initial stages of their adolescence. A certain streak of genius makes an ominous impression on them, for there exists a deep gulf between genius and the teaching profession. Anyone with a touch of genius seems to his teachers a freak from the very first. As far as teachers are concerned, they define young geniuses as those who are bad, disrespectful, smoke at fourteen, fall in love at fifteen, can be found at sixteen hanging out in bars, read forbidden books, write scandalous essays, occasionally stare down a teacher in class. . . . A school master will prefer to have a couple of dumbheads in his class than a single genius, and if you regard it objectively, he is of course right. . . . Once dead, and enveloped by the comfortable nimbus of remoteness, they (the geniuses) are paraded by the schoolmasters before other generations of students as showpieces and noble examples. . . . (pages 99, 100).

In death even the more ordinary student awakens the dormant or repressed sensibilities of the facult. When a student named Hindinger drowns, "They realized for a fleeting moment how irrecoverable and unique is each life and youth, on whom they perpetrated so much thoughtless harm at other times" (page 94). Because this realization is so rare and inoperative in the teachers and school during Hans' time there, they are guilty in his premature psychic crippling and ultimately in his death so that Flaig, the pietist shoemaker, can point his finger at them, along with the paster at the gravesite: "There you see a couple of gentlemen who helped to put him where he is now" (page 187). Maulbronn, the "barbaric ambition of his father and his grammar-school teacher" (page 121) all share the guilt:

> Why was he forced to work until late at night during the most sensitive and precarious period of his life? Why purposely alienated from his friends in grammar school? Why deprived of needed rest and forbidden to go fishing? Why instilled with a shabby ambition? Why had they not even granted him his well-deserved vacation after the examinations (page 121)?

3) Herman Heilner combines in himself, for Hans, all the promise that love and friendship bear for the development of friends with, further, a budding exemplification of the "Übermensch."[7] Hesse's high esteem of friendship appears again in Beneath the Wheel as it will consistently in nearly all of his novels to the very end. His superlative acclaim of it in Peter Camenzind is more than heady adolescent reaction to love from outside the family circle. When Heilner plants a tender kiss on Hans--such man to man kisses occur in

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[7] Heilner's exemplification of Nietzsche's ideal may be understood from this paragraph in Nietzsche's Joyful Wisdom:

> There are enough of men who may yield to their impulses gracefully and carelessly: but they do not do so, for fear of that imaginary 'evil thing' in nature! That is the cause why there is so little nobility to be found among men: the indication of which will always be to have no fear of oneself, to expect nothing disgraceful from oneself, to fly without hesitation withersoever we are impelled--we free-born birds! Wherever we come, there will always be freedom and sunshine around us (page 229).

a number of the works of Hesse--he demonstrates to Hans the seriousness and beauty of love and simultaneously affronts bourgeois convention and manners. It surprises and embarasses Hans as something "frightening," "new," "perhaps dangerous" (page 78). Friendship with the tameless, soaring spirit of Heilner promises some of the long-denied realization to his personality for here is someone whose love for him can help make him more truly his self and whose ideals might help him transcend the "shabby ambition" of father and schoolmaster that sent him to Maulbronn. In describing the arrival of the boys at Maulbronn for the first time Hesse articulates their largely unrecognized hopes regarding each other:

> Most boys were on the lookout for new acquaintances--town boys for farm boys, mountain boys for lowlanders--*all in accordance with a secret longing for variety and completion.* (. . . nack einem geheimen Trieb zum Mannigfaltigen und zur Ergänzung: GS, i 438) The young beings groped around indecisively for what suited them best, and out of the awareness of sameness grew the desire for differentiation, and in some cases awakened for the first time the growing germ of a personality out of its childhood slumber (page 71).

Peter Camenzind spoke ecstatically of how delicious friendship was, the noblest possession a man could have. Here suggestions are made regarding its more specific powers: it is sought for as a completion, some reality apprehended as desirable by the lover but lacking in his own self. Further, even the desire for completion can find realization only in someone with whom there must be some minimum of sameness, of similarity; this in turn happily leads to differentiation and the development and definition of one's own unique personality. Hesse expresses here the truth of the necessity of some socialization to actualize the potential of the individual.

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Yet, as if saying to have one good means excluding other goods, Hans finds as the story progresses that his surrender to the charm and fascination of Heilner spells shipwreck for his academic career. He undoubtedly reflects Hesse's own thought, though, when he considers the academic failure well worth it: Their friendship was "a treasure worth everything he was missing in school--an intensified, warmer form of existence ("ein erhötes wärmeres Leben"--GS, i, 469) to which his previous sober and dutiful life could not hold a candle" (page 103).

Summation

Peter Camenzind touches more of the themes of Hesse's maturer works than does Beneath the Wheel. Peter Camenzind accordingly leaves us with the impression of a collection of tentative beginnings, explorations, from which the author eventually draws back. Beneath the Wheel touches fewer of these themes and concentrates very strongly on the dehumanization wrought by an educational system. This is its distinctive contribution to any theology of the person in Hesse's works: to show the extremely inhibitive and withering effects of an education built, not around the person, but around the materialist ideals of the bourgeoisie and the simply cerebral and therefore incomplete ideals and practice of teachers in such a system. More positively Beneath the Wheel marks an incipient self-definition--over against these hostile powers--of Hesse's hero.

In Peter Camenzind the protagonist already feels an alienation from ordinary society and life; in Beneath the Wheel this receives sharpened definition as alienation from strictly middle-class Philistinism. Both see the individual as natively more worth saving than society and as receiving ordinarily only pain and obstruction from society. The bourgeois world and its ideals, or better, its modus vivendi, will remain a target of Hesse's criticism in later books.

Nature, confronted so directly and frequently in Peter Camenzind, is present in Beneath the Wheel, only in a somewhat more restful mood and, further, as reflected in poetry, the poetry of Heilner.

Friendship--love between the sexes is almost entirely absent from Beneath the Wheel except momentarily--again receives the veneration of author and hero as in Peter Camenzind. It does, in fact, receive some development in Beneath the Wheel. It appears as more than the exhilarating and sentimental experience of adolescents. Here it is pictured as 1) a form of completion of the person; 2) a stimulus to the differentiation and unfolding of personality, the growth of personal uniqueness.

Moreover, through the idealization of a friendship set against the background of the unyielding and excessively rationalist educational system, Hesse affirms the equality, at least, of the other aspects of human personality, the "intensified, warmer" forms of the human psyche. This will receive much emphasis and repeated exposition in later works. An amoralism of the Nietzschean type, to be met with again, is implicit in the author's judgment on the educational system and in his approbation of such a spirit as Heilner.

III. Gertrude

Summary

Gertrude is written in the first person, the narrator being Kuhn, a musician. He evinces a strong interest in music from early childhood and once through the ordinary school course he determines on music as a career despite a lack of encouragement from parents. At music school in his late teens he does indifferently by the standards of the teachers. One winter, while at the school, in response to a challenge from a coquettish girl he and she are involved in a tobagganing accident which results in a permanently crippled leg for him.

Back at music school he has a little more success and tries his hand at composing while also studying the violin. An up-and-coming opera singer, Heinrich Muoth, happens on one of Kuhn's songs, likes it and includes it in his concerts. Muoth is a Byronesque type, a very strong ego, moody, passionate, very attractive to women, restless and generally unsatisfied. He takes to Kuhn and helps him get a position as violinist with the opera orchestra. About this time as his friendship with Muoth is developing and his music receiving some recognition, Kuhn falls in love with Gertrude Imthor, the charming daughter of a patron of music and friend of Kuhn's family. He pursues her rather hesitantly and timidly and finally writes her of his love for her; she responds by asking if they cannot remain just friends.

Kuhn has been working on an opera; Muoth is very interested in singing in it and helps arrange for its production. Kuhn brings Gertrude and Muoth together to go over various parts of the opera only to find shortly afterwards that they are in love. Kuhn seriously contemplates suicide but his father's final illness and death prevent that as he is called home. A former teacher of Kuhn's, Lohe, now a Theosophist, encourages Kuhn to get away from self-preoccupation by helping someone else. Kuhn decides to live with his mother and try to help her. This really fails but eventually he does bring her back to the city with him. Gertrude and Muoth marry; the opera with Muoth in the lead is a success. Meanwhile a sister of a musical friend of Kuhn's, a girl named Brigitte, is much drawn to Kuhn but he is unable to reciprocate because of his still strong attachment to Gertrude.

Very soon Gertrude and Muoth have difficulties. They attract each other and yet grate on each other. She returns to live with her father, intending ultimately to go back to Muoth. Muoth asks Kuhn to visit him. He does and they drink a toast to a painting of Gertrude. Muoth has been ruining himself recently with drink. While sleeping at the house after their evening together Kuhn is awakened by a servant and brought to Muoth's room. Muoth has killed himself. A flicker of a thought of trying again to win Gertrude comes to Kuhn but he rejects it knowing that even now she still loves Muoth.

Gertrude[8] is what the Germans call "Kunstlerroman," in this case a story revolving around musicians. It was published early in Hesse's married life, 1910, and the contemporary reader finds it very redolent of the whole pre-World War I atmosphere of Europe, the sort of book that could have been made into a rather bittersweet--rather more bitter--light opera in the Viennese style. It is totally concerned with individual happiness and fortunes in an apparently apolitical world. Moreover, the constant concern with personal states of mind, feelings, mark the book as romantic, as romantic as anything in contemporary literature.

Much of the story and its characters reflect closely Hesse's own life and background. Hesse was well initiated into the great composers by a step-brother; like Kuhn in the novel he played the violin and, as in the book, he and his wife had been drawn together by their love of music. Like the protagonist of Gertrude Hesse too had been involved in work on an opera; he wrote a libretto for the composer Othmar Schoeck (Mileck, page 151). Music was, of course, a life-long love of Hesse's.

Analyzing early works of Hermann Hesse Wilhelm Hartung "confirms what Hesse has often maintained: 'die unglückslichsten Tage meines Lebens gäbe ich schwerer hin als alle heiteren' (Gertrud, 3rd sentence). Hesse's ideal of happiness is not fulfillment, but sad, romantic dreaming; his attitude towards life is one of contented resignation, with wine and memories to console him." (Mileck, page 130). This may well be the main problem with treating Gertrude under our specific theme. The protagonist is in many ways a passive, dreaming type whose creativity itself is almost severed, at least in his mind, from any effort or study and linked rather to the gushing forth of hidden springs (page 67). Though more of a worldly success than Camenzind ever was, Kuhn seems really less daring, less active than the boy from Nimikon. His enjoyment of sad, dreamy retrospection, certainly a romantic trait, is not typical of the literary currents of our day and must close *Gertrude* to many a reader who finds Hesse's later works more palatable. It provides little development of Hesse's theories about the self.

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[8] Hermann Hesse, Gertrude, trans. Hilda Rosner (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969). References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 132). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume ii. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, ii, page 9).

If there is some concern with fulfillment in *Gertrude* it is largely for that of an artist who has it within himself in such a way that external circumstances and achievements are of little import to it. By fulfillment or self-realization one usually means more than this, some achievement or realization that has its effects also in the world around us or in others as well as in the visible aspects of one's own life. In the very first lines of the novel, the writer lists three elements that should matter in a person's existence: 1) "to accept the inevitable consciously"; ("das Unabwendbare mit Bewußtsein hinzunehmen,") 2) "to taste the good and the bad to the full"; ("sich neben dem Äusseren ein inneres, eigentlicheres, nicht zufälliges Schicksal zu erobern") 3) "to make for oneself a more individual, unaccidental and inward destiny alongside one's external

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fate" (page 3, GS, ii, 9). Notice the individual and inward destiny is "alongside one's external fate." Both one and three especially express the passivity suggested above and two remains throughout the book more of a wish than a task. True, the third element speaks of "making for oneself" and this certainly means activity, but again the activity mentioned is that which might be found equally in a purely withdrawn life; it is alongside anything that may happen in the outer world. As such, by ordinary standards, it would hardly qualify as action. This is not said to denigrate the action and life of a man's interior which may be more real and important than all the wheels of industry turning in his environment. Rather the point is that Hesse's understanding of action and destiny at this time, at least, was rather passive and romantic in the sense of dreamy and reflective. Such a dichotomy between inner life and outer fate, while met with frequently, does not seem ideal or truly actual either if one regards man as a whole whose parts are not really that separable.

The second of Hesse's three elements of importance for a personal life, "to taste the good and bad to the full," is certainly not a program carried out with any great verve in the subsequent pages of the book. The tasting is not that of a bee who rushes from flower to flower; it is more that of the commercial taster before whom are set a number of different draughts. It is more of a hint of things to come in Demian, Steppenwolf, or Narcissus and Goldmund, for example. Kuhn does experience an accident of life-long import; he has a successful opera produced; meets some lively friends; is with Muoth at the time of his suicide--yet most of the incidents in his life come to him, rather than he to them, except in the case of the opera and his music. Though, here again, he is fond of thinking of his music as a sanctuary, a refuge (page 4). His never-completed project of suicide is, whatever might have been the initiative required to carry it out, basically a hurt reaction to life's buffeting.

Life and the Self

Nevertheless, amid much concern with the mystery of creativity in musicians, singers and composers, amid much witness to Hesse's near worship of music, there can be discerned traces of concern with the problem of how to face life. What will become a direct preoccupation later on is present only obliquely here.

"A real artist has to be unhappy" (page 177). Possibly maudlin, but this is a repeated refrain throughout Gertrude: suffering, stress, emotional torment, are the indispensable soil for true creativity, the only soil from which can come a bountiful aesthetic harvest. But our more specific concern, the self, its realization, discovery, does peer out at the reader even though more peripherally than will be the case in later works. Hesse does not yet seem to be as determined to probe thoroughly the question of how a human being finds fulfillment, happiness or self-actualization. It is here but as a problem which the writer or the hero is as yet subordinating to other concerns. Still there are discernible in the novel several distinct approaches to the matter of the self and each receives at least momentary consideration.

1) Earlier the hesitancy and diffidence of Kuhn's actual efforts to win Gertrude were remarked. After hearing that she is definitely

going to marry Muoth and convinced of their incompatibility, he assumes an attitude of resignation and fatalism.

> I was now of the opinion that it was foolish and dangerous to stretch out one's hand to alter other people's destinies. I also had no reason to think that my hand was skillful or that I could regard myself as one who could help and understand other people, after my attempts in this direction had failed and discouraged me. Even now I strongly doubt the ability of people to alter and shape their own lives and those of other people to any appreciable extent. One can acquire money, fame and distinction, but one cannot create happiness or unhappiness, not for oneself or for others. One can only accept what comes, although one can, to be sure, accept it in entirely different ways. As far as I was concerned, I would make no more strenuous endeavors to try and find a place in the sun but would accept what was allotted to me, try to make the best of it and, if possible, turn it into some good.
>
> Although life continues independent of such reflections, sincere thought and resolutions leave the soul more at peace and help one to bear the unalterable. At least, it subsequently appeared to me that since I had become resigned and indifferent toward my personal fate, life had treated me more gently.
>
> That one sometimes unexpectedly achieves without effort what one has previously been unable to attain, despite all endeavors and good will, I soon learned through my mother (pages167, 168).

One can hear an echo in this of the withdrawal of Peter Camenzind from a number of enterprises, from a disappointing world and ill-matched people. Gertrude's decision to marry Muoth really crushes Kuhn. He fears for the outcome but has no confidence that he can alter it and no certainty that Muoth's "vices" are so unbearable. He is both repelled and fascinated by them. And Muoth's "vices" are the excesses of a strong self-concern and egoism which make it possible for him, unlike Kuhn, to make an impression on the world and the people around him. Consequently Kuhn is by no means simply uneasy with Muoth's excesses; he also admires and envies them. Kuhn's

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reaction here, undoubtedly a mixture of emotion and reflection, well illustrates the temptation of Hesse's temperament to withdrawal, to leaving the field of battle, to acceptance, hoping that what comes will not always be the difficult or the painful. This attitude is not the last word in Gertrude on the subject. The last word is more active but before coming to it another response to the self and its happiness must be weighed.

2) Elsewhere in the book Kuhn entertains the notion that the self is best served by self-forgetfulness or self-surrender: one becomes happy and is fully realized to the extent that he gives himself in love to another or is devoted to someone or something other than self. This attitude stands somewhat midway between the one outlined under 1) and that to follow in 3), a more Promethean determination to shape life by one's own energies and insight. Both Kuhn's father and an old teacher, Lohe, formulate for us this second attitude, the paradoxical route to self-fulfillment through self-emptying of self-forgetfulness. Self-realization or fulfillment becomes the by-product of love, devotion, surrender. First, Kuhn's father:

> Youth ends when egotism does; maturity begins when one lives for others. Young people have many pleasures and many sorrows, because they have only themselves to think of. . . . To most people, however, there comes a time when the situation changes, when they live more for others, not for any virtuous reasons, but quite naturally. A family is the reason with most people. One thinks less about oneself and one's wishes when one has a family. Others lose their egotism in a responsible position, in politics, in art or in science. A man does not marry just to have children, but if he has them they change him, and finally he sees that everything has happened just for them. . . . (pages 132, 133).

Kuhn's old teacher is retired but actively delving into theosophy

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(page 64). He sees the musician Kuhn as suffering from a malaise common to "the upper classes in Central Europe" (page 154). Ultimately Kuhn takes his advice about forgetting self in others seriously and to the extent of trying to work at his widowed mother's happiness. Is Hesse utterly out of sympathy with this view or is he merely questioning it? What both Kuhn's father and Lohe say is a common enough interpretation of the musician's illness and basically has a long and reputable history as the implementation of Christ's words about losing one's self in order to find a better self. Here is Lohe's diagnosis of Kuhn's troubles and his proposed cure:

> You are mentally sick. . . . You are suffering from a sickness, one that is fashionable, unfortunately, and that one comes across every day among sensitive people. It is related to moral insanity and can also be called individualism or imaginary loneliness. Modern books are full of it. . . . Those who suffer from this illness need only a couple of disappointments to make them believe that there is no link between them and other people, that all people go about in a state of complete loneliness, that they never really understand each other, share anything or have anything in common. . . . But there really is a cure for it. It is pure fiction that there is no bridge between one person and another, that everyone goes about lonely and misunderstood. On the contrary. What people have in common with each other is much more and of greater importance than what each person has in his own nature, what makes him different from others. . . . Learn to think more about others than yourself for a time. It is the only way for you to get better. . . . You must learn to love someone so much that his or her well-being is more important than your own. . . . Try to understand other people, try to please them and be just to them.(pages 154-156 passim).

Out of desperation rather than conviction Kuhn decides to give Lohe's advice a somewhat reluctant try. Summarizing the advice as: "'Live for others! Don't take yourself so seriously!'", he confesses finally:

> This outlook was quite a variance with my feelings. It also had a flavor of the catechism and confirmation instruction which, like every healthy young person, I thought of with aversion and dislike (page 157).

His efforts to please his mother he concludes are in vain (page 163). The suspicion that all this advice of the elders is not congenial to the author or to Kuhn or that it is regarded as *premature* is borne out by an interesting passage from a letter of Hesse's referred to earlier:

> Das Bedürfnis der Jugend ist sich selber ernst nehmen zu können. Das Bedürfnis des Alters ist: sich selber opfern können. . . . Man musz erst ein voller Mensch, eine wirkliche Persönlichkeit geworden sein und die Leiden dieser Individuation erlitten habe, ehe man das Opfer dieser Persönlichkeit bringen kann (Unseld, page 13).

3) The third approach in *Gertrude* to the problem of the self opens the door to the possibility that one may do something about life and his own destiny, something more positive in Kuhn's mind than self-surrender or giving up of self. And what he says here is to become, with much more development, a distinctly Hessean characteristic in later works. Reflecting on Muoth's suicide, Gertrude's tragic life and his own life, Kuhn come to regard fate (which earlier he was ready to accept) as "not kind" and finds "no good or reason in nature" (page 235). In a sort of concluding moral to the story, he raises his expectation of human nature:

> But there is good and reason in us, in human beings, with whom fortune (*der Zufall*) plays and we can be stronger than nature (*Natur*) and fate (*Schicksal*), if only for a few hours. And we can draw close to one another in times of need, understand and love one another, and live to comfort each other.
>
> And sometimes, when the black depths are silent, we can do even more. We can then be gods for moments, stretch out a commanding hand and create things which were not there before

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> and which, when they are created, continue to live without us. Out of sounds, words and other frail and worthless things, we can construct playthings--songs and poems full of meaning, consolation and goodness, more beautiful and enduring than the grim sport of fortune and destiny. We can keep the spirit of God in our hearts and, at times, when we are full of him, he can appear in our eyes and in our words. . . . (pages 235, 236; GS ii, 191).

This seems to be a noble attempt to affirm man's capacity to prevail in the face of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." Whether Hesse intends it to be so analytic or not, three distinct affirmations are present:

a) We can be somehow superior to nature and fate, if only momentarily. This is really not developed here. It is mentioned as the slightest anticipation of a theme to be developed in later works.

b) Often we can make life worthwhile by giving love and understanding to others in need. This fairly obvious point was already more vividly illustrated in Peter Camenzind and Beneath the Wheel.

c) Men can be creative, make something that will last, something that will manifest God to others. The idea of the death-defying character of creative work will be prominent in Narcissus and Goldmund.

The strongest note of all in Gertrude is the conviction that creativity which is founded in and grows from suffering, lack, pain, emptiness, passion's torments, can itself justify all these by putting before men their results, "songs and poems full of meaning, consolation and goodness" (page 235). The following novel, Rosshalde, continues the theme of creativity.

As in Peter Camenzind so in Gertrude the hero is hurled back by

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the waves of adverse fortune and asks himself whether it is worth rushing back into the contest. Tentatively he opines that men can rise above disappointment. *More* surely he is convinced that they can make of the disappointments of life the material of creativity and thus give them meaning.

IV. Rosshalde

Summary

Rosshalde is the name of a country estate, the home of a talented and successful painter, Johann Veraguth and his family. He and his wife Adele have been living on the same estate, estranged from each other for years, she in the large house, he in a small bungalow built for him. The seven year old son Pierre lives with the mother but flits between the two and Veraguth himself goes to the large house daily to dine. The life of both Johann and Adele has been poisoned by the bitterness and unnatural state of their existence. They probably would have formalized their separation by a divorce but Adele refuses to give up Pierre to Johann and he is determined not to lose Pierre's love as he has that of an older son Albert, apparently in his late teens or early twenties. His art and Pierre are the two foci of Veraguth's life.

Near the opening of the story an old and cherished friend of Veraguth's, Otto Burkhardt, arrives for a visit from Malaya where he has a plantation. Son Albert comes home from school about the same time. Contented, self-assured himself, Otto sees the blighted existence that the Veraguths live and urges Johann to make a break, leave and come to the Orient with him soon. Veraguth's tenacious desire to keep Pierre for himself is the chief obstacle and Otto tells him he must give up Pierre. Veraguth finally decides to go off with Otto in the fall.

Meanwhile Pierre falls ill with what turns out to be meningitis. Both parents unstintingly care for him and Adele tells Veraguth that he can have Pierre if he gets well. Ironically Veraguth has made up his mind now to leave Pierre and make a new beginning. Pierre dies and as the novel ends Adele and Albert are leaving Rosshalde together and Veraguth is preparing to pack and go with Burkhardt to Malaysia.

Creativity

Rosshalde,[9] like Gertrude, contines Hesse's interest in the life, one like his own, of an artist living on the fringe of society. Creativity is again central, studied for what it might be worth in terms of human happiness. Here, though, the note of ambivalence about the totally satisfying nature of creativity seems stronger than it was in Gertrude. Kuhn in the former novel was more resigned to failures in his personal relationships as long as he could rely on his music. Johann Veraguth really is not. Veraguth's commitment to painting and his success at it still leave him very much unsatisfied. His dissatisfaction with painting is by no means that of a dilletante; rather he works ascetically and relentlessly at it in a room that "knew only work and self-denial" (page 31). Despite such devotion, unwavering work and some success, his artistic preoccupation is at the most 1) a refuge from life's other less satisfying moments; or 2) an anaesthetic or 3) an excrescence, however noble, erupting from the suffering endured by a man in a most unhappy web of personal relationships.

Under the influence of their friendship and a bottle of Moselle Veraguth explains to Otto the pain and dismal story of his relation to Adele from the very beginning of their marriage. He withdrew more and more when he realized their disparity and: "I became more and more industrious and gradually learned to take refuge in my work" (page 66). Pride and horror at having to admit how miserable he is inhibit him somewhat and he attempts to project an image of the active, live, unbowed artist to Otto. Otto is not deceived and diagnoses Veraguth's life well. He tells Veraguth:

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[9] Hermann Hesse, Rosshalde, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970). References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 76). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume ii.

> When you tell me one thing and my eyes another, I believe my eyes, and I can see that you're in a very bad way. Your work keeps you going, but it's more of an anesthetic than a pleasure. You waste half your magnificent energies in self-denial and petty daily friction. You're not happy, at best you're resigned. And that, my boy, isn't worthy of you (page 70).

Once again, as in Gertrude, art is presented as a necessary release from pain and suffering in an artist's life and conversely as dependent on such suffering for its origination. Kuhn compensated or consoled himself for a crippled leg, poor luck in love, by writing a fine opera. A crippled married life is the deep and bitter spring from which flows Johann Veraguth's painting:

> . . . once again he (Burkhardt) was terrified at the suddenly revealed abyss of inner loneliness and self-torment in Veraguth's life. This no doubt was the secret at which Johann had occasionally hinted over the years, and which, Burkhardt had assumed, lay hidden in the soul of every great artist. This then was the source of the man's uncannily insatiable drive to create, to seize upon the world each hour anew with his senses and to overpower it. And this too was the source of the strange sadness with which great works of art often fill the silent beholder (page 74).

Veraguth in fact creates one of his greatest works out of his relationships with Adele and Pierre. Without bearing any facial likeness to either Johann or Adele, this painting bears a great likeness to their relationship. It depicts:

> a playing child between the bowed and sorrowful figures of his parents. Standing on the same ground, bathed in the same air and light, the figures of the man and woman breathed death and bitterest coldness, while between them, golden and jubilant, the child gleamed as though in a blissful light of his own (page 102).

Into this work "he had breathed all the anguish of his soul, though intending nothing more than a piece of perfect craftsmanship" (page 102). Art really more assuages the ache in Veraguth's heart stemming from his marriage than totally fulfills his nature. Negatively even his estranged son Albert recognizes the place of art in his father's life:

> He doesn't get anything out of his fame, and not much out of his money either; that's not what he works for (page 174).

Failure to participate in life happily both necessitates his painting and propels his artistic passion. At the end:

> . . . What remained to him was his art, of which he had never felt as sure as he did now. There remained the consolation of the outsider, to whom it is not given to seize the cup of life and drain it; there remained the strange, cool, and yet irresistible passion to see, to observe, and to participate with secret pride in the work of creation. That was the residue and the value of his unsuccessful life, the imperturbable loneliness and cold delight of art, and to follow that star without detours would from now on be his destiny (page 212).

"The consolation of an outsider," "the imperturbable loneliness and cold delight of art"--art is all this for the outsider, for one, for some reason, locked out of ordinary human happiness. With some liberty, it may be said that it is cold consolation for the lonely outsider. One senses throughout Rósshalde that Veraguth would have abandoned his art for a truly joyous human love, such as never reaches maturity in his marriage and which he momentarily thinks to find in Pierre.

Love

Rosshalde very likely, as Joseph Mileck says, "foreshadowed the approaching impasse" of Hesse's own first marriage (Mileck, page 9). The story is dominated largely by the failure of Veraguth's love for his wife Adele and their older son Albert. Artistically the themes of creativity and love or love's failure are in real competition in the novel. It is somewhat difficult to assign to either one the central position in Veraguth's life. However, insofar as his creativity seems to depend on or flow from his unhappy life, his unhappy loves, love may justifiably be seen as more fundamental, most central. The reaction of the world's art critics to his painting means little compared to the absent love: "They meant nothing, less than nothing; at that moment, only the glance of a friend or the kiss of a loved one could have rewarded him, given him pleasure and strength" (page 129).

His personal relationships, the tissue of the book, go all the way from his adoration of his little boy Pierre, through his great satisfaction and happiness in Burkhardt's friendship--again the seemingly indispensable male friend in Hesse's novels--to the dead and embittered relationship with his wife and the almost flaming hatred between himself and the older son Albert.

As was pointed out earlier, the painter's unconvincing attempts to justify his life totally in terms of his art show how deeply love's failures have hurt him or affected him. At the end of the book as he hopes to begin a new life, the conviction that the meaning of life is to be found in love, that in it is the realization of man's potential, dawns on him.

> He saw clearly that despite his many attempts, despite the yearning that had never left him, he had passed the garden of life by. *Never had he lived out a love to its bottommost depths*, never *until these last days*. At the bedside of his dying child he had known, all too late, his only true love; then he had *forgotten*, and *risen above*, *himself* (page 212) (Italics mine).

The intuition that "forgetting" one's self and "rising above" one's self define true love seems to be quite belated. It only comes here as Adele and Albert drive away in the chilling rain and he is left in his "frozen loneliness" (page 211). There is good reason to wonder whether this typically misunderstood or alienated artist knows well enough his own responsibility or guilt. Earlier, when retailing to Burkhardt the miserable tale of his marriage's declension, he comes close to this but rather unwittingly:

> For a few years it was bearable, not good, not bad. At that time it might have been possible to save quite a good deal. But I was disappointed and I didn't hide it very well, I kept demanding the very thing that Adele was unable to give. She was never very lively; she was solemn and heavy. I might have noticed it sooner. When there was trouble, she was never able to look the other way or make light of it. Her only response to my demands and moods, my passionate yearning and in the end my disappointment, was a long-suffering silence, a touching, quiet, heroic patience which often moved me but was no help either to her or to me (page 65).

He knows well his own expectations and demands but apparently less well how he could meet Adele's temperament. Burkhardt's reaction to this says little if anything about Veraguth's own failure but only of his need for breaking away from this life and starting over again.

Admittedly human love always has something of self in it;

anything else would be psychologically most improbable. Christian teaching too presumes that love is partially self-centered; we are to love our neighbor *as* we love ourselves. Yet it appears that Veraguth is really killing love in his life by an excessive preponderance of self in all his loves. In his love, early in their marriage, for Adele, he expects, it seems, *primarily* some answer to his needs, not an opportunity to give himself.

Similarly with his love for Pierre and earlier for Albert. Probably only in the moments of intense care and concern for the dying Pierre does he escape from his self-preoccupation: "Then it seemed to him that he had never in all his life known what love was, never until these watchful moments" (page 188). The more usual stress in Veraguth's attitude is, however, in these two passages: "If this boy (Pierre) should also turn away from him, he had no desire to live" (page 16) and later, speaking of his feelings during Pierre's illness and at moments when the boy seemed to be better he thinks:

> Everything that tormented him and weighed him down, the whole dismal sodden burden of his life turned to nothing, became light and insignificant beside his loving anguish over his child, and no sooner had that dark shadow receded than everything looked brighter and his whole life seemed bearable (page 136).

Possibly too much can be made of this but these two declarations of his love for Pierre themselves have a very strong reference to Veraguth's own states, how the boy affects *him*. Further, even when the boy is well and comes to see him, Veraguth is often too lost in his work to give him time and attention (pages 96-97).

Elsewhere a patently possessive and even "competitive" aspect to

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Veraguth's love for Pierre (and Albert at one time) augment our impression of a self-occupied spirit. He speaks of being jealous and fighting over Albert's love when he was younger and Albert's love hadn't yet totally gone to his mother (page 65). Throughout there is the memory of a fight over Albert's love followed by a competition for the love of Pierre now that Albert is irretrievably in his mother's camp. During Pierre's illness there is Adele's promise that if the boy lives Veraguth may have him, a really somewhat grating "barter" approach to a child and his love. And even after Pierre's death when both parents are deep in grief, Veraguth's consolation to his estranged and now grieving wife contains these gratuitously mean remarks: "Try to get over it, and *don't forget that Pierre belongs to me*. You would have given him up to me, and I thank you again for that. *Even* then I knew he was going to die, but it was generous of you" (page 209) (Italics mine).

Summarily one is most inclined to consider Veraguth's love for his wife and children to have always been quite immature, too self-centered, too self-seeking, too rarely or too little capable of forgetting itself. A decided concern for personal fulfillment is present but one is bound to question whether it could ever be realized or fulfilled in such loves.

New Beginnings

A new element in Hesse's unfolding understanding of life and the self's realization in it appears in this novel and serves to relate it and its predecessors in some continuity to the later great works such as *Demian* and *Steppenwolf*. This is the element of decision

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or initiative in life. Important as some element of acceptance of life may be, Hesse begins forcefully here to argue the necessity of making new beginnings, of breaking with the past, with former lives, when these hinder true happiness or leave the self stalled on life's highway. In Veraguth's decision, not actually carried out in the novel but definitely projected for the immediate future, there can be seen a Hessean character of the type to be met later who goes beyond the acceptance and resignation of the earlier Camenzind or of Kuhn (Gertrude) to an active intervention in the control of life. Destiny is not something that we merely accept as given but something we ourselves help make.

If one's self is to be made, realized, fulfilled, it depends not entirely on destiny but on making new beginnings after failures, trying new routes, decisions, in other words. The expositor of this position and possibly an exemplar of it in his own life is Burkhardt who, to Veraguth's eye, "breathed self-assurance and serene enjoyment of life" (page 32).

Once sure of the morass in which Veraguth lives--the unhappy marriage and his possessive attachment to Pierre--Burkhardt proposes that Veraguth should give up Pierre, leave Rosshalde and, in lieu of any other plans, come to Malaysia for a while with him. Veraguth is at first almost unable to contemplate such a break:

> . . . quite unaware that his unspoken yearning responded to Burkhardt's intentions. What bewitched him with images and roused his longing was not only the glitter of tropical seas and archipelagoes, or the color play of half-naked primitive peoples. More than that, it was the remoteness and quietness of a world where his sufferings and cares, his struggles and privations would pale, where his mind would cast off its hundred little burdens and a new

> atmosphere, pure and free from guilt and suffering, would envelope him (page 42).

What Burkhardt wishes to draw Veraguth to is a seizure of the initiative in his life. Since his marriage it has been largely a matter of Veraguth reacting to the various difficulties and frustrations the marriage has brought, albeit this has been justified by the wish to retain, problematical and temporary as it might be, Pierre's love. Burkhardt argues that since a divorce or separation has always been contingent on Adele's release of Pierre to him (Veraguth), the attachment to Pierre is itself an obstacle to be overcome. For, obviously, marriage with Adele and living as they have been living, is poisoning his life, cutting him off from the world of the living and blighting his future. Now, while there is still time, change all this, break with Adele, give up Pierre and make a new life, says Burkhardt.

In educating his friend to this position Burkhardt tells Veraguth:

> You waste half your magnificent energies in self-denial and petty daily friction. You're not happy, at best you're resigned. And that, my boy, isn't worthy of you (page 70).

Veraguth is fundamentally so despairing that he responds:

> Resigned? That may be. A good many people are in that boat. Who's happy (page 71)?

Burkhardt:

> Anyone who has hope is happy! And what have you to hope for? Not even outward success, honors, or money; of those you have more than enough. Why, you don't even remember what life and joy are. You're contented, because you've given up hoping (page 71).

Veraguth mulls over Burkhardt's advice for months and, after a hard struggle, accepts it:

> Over and over again he had to repeat his conversations with Otto; with ever increasing warmth the repressed desires and needs of his vigorous nature rose up from the depths where they had so long lain frozen and imprisoned, and this upsurge, this spring thaw got the better of his old illusion, the sick illusion that he was an old man who could do no more than endure life. The deep, potent hypnosis of resignation had been broken, and through the breach poured the unconscious instinctual forces of a life long curbed and cheated (page 85).

Elsewhere he describes the release brought about by his decision:

> It was as though his life had become once more a limpid stream or river, driving resolutely in the direction assigned to it, whereas hitherto it had stagnated in the swampy lake of indecision. . . . His life was flowing again, driving resolutely toward freedom and the future (pages 153, 154).

In making this vital decision Veraguth touches on another theme of Hesse's which will gain prominence in the books to follow, the close relation of birth and death, that every new birth or beginning involves a death. He understands finally that Pierre must in some sense die--at least as the focus of his life. And, indeed, in the novel Pierre dies too in that meningitis kills him. In giving up Pierre, even before natural death took him away, Veraguth has become stronger than his wife, for once has acted otherwise than in response to her moves and this too well symbolizes the minor Copernican revolution realized by his decision.

Hesse has come quite a ways from Camenzind. Rosshalde argues strongly that life cannot be lived out in miserable or merely resigned acquiescence in external destiny: if oppressive circumstances can be changed or altered, man must do that. A happy, fruitful life is to be preferred to a "togetherness" which harms all who share it.

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These four works, Peter Camenzind, Beneath the Wheel, Gertrude and Rosshalde, the first four of Hesse's being considered here, are bound together most of all by their common spirit, itself more romantic and less strenuous than the works to follow. It has already been observed that the dissimilarity of these books to those that follow is not in the nature of any absolute break. Most essentially, Hesse's quest for understanding of the self, is only tentatively begun in these four works. Peter Camenzind leaves his mountain village and makes some starts in a wider world but ultimately retires to Nimikon. Hans Giebenrath enters into the broader world of the preparatory school but is crushed by a number of circumstances and his life gets nowhere near blossoming. Kuhn is an extraordinarily reticent musician who misses his chances with Gertrude in a way that some critics find unbelievable. He does take some steps into the external world but his life remains lived within his music largely. Veraguth in the last of these four novels is chained and bound by a sad family situation and, before the book's end, has determined to leave it all and begin a new life by going to the Orient. The book ends before this is done making it an appropriate bridge from the earlier novels with their hesitancy about taking over the controls in life to Demian where the hero builds up to a program of self-reliant self-creation.

Though they may represent some progress from Hesse's earlier, even more obvious romanticism, these four works still will strike today's reader as quite romantic. Common to all of them is an atmosphere heavy with yearning, dreaming and relished melancholy.

While suffering and pain are properly bewailed, one still feels the characters would feel quite lost without its "enjoyment." All this may not only be characteristic of romanticism or of decadent romanticism, but also true of certain personalities at any time; however, by present standards, it is usually felt to be somewhat mawkish and not ennobled to the extent these works do. Many of the characters in these four novels are too precious, too determinedly helpless and apparently often willingly "persecuted" by outside forces to attract much sympathy. Fate in these early works is as yet more an external force than an internal power able to give direction and élan to a personal life.

One could complain of the lack of action in the novels but this will remain a constant in Hesse's fiction; they are all largely reflective and any action is more alluded to than described and the reader is meant to be engaged in feeling with the protagonist or others. Too, it seems that many distinguished and popular novelists share this lack of exuberant physical action and drama with Hesse; many are primarily concerned with the emotional relations of people and much time is spent in elucidating the characters' own reflections and feelings towards others. Such a novelist was Francois Mauriac, to a great degree a contemporary of Hesse's; also Andre Gide. Boulby gives Hesse's own comment on this matter:

> In the 'Preface of a Writer to His Selected Works' (1921) Hesse compares the great novelists and narrative artists of the nineteenth century, such as Dickens, Turgeniev, and Keller, with himself, concluding that he is not really a novelist at all. In this situation he finds that he is not alone: Modern German literature, for the last hundred years, has been full of novels which are not novels, and of writers who behave as though they were storytellers but are not. . . .

> The story as disguised lyric poetry, the novel as a borrowed label for the attempts of poetic personalities to express their experience of themselves and the world, this was a specifically German and Romantic matter, in this I at once realized myself to be involved and to share responsibility. . . . Of my tales--there was no longer any doubt about this--not a single one was pure enough as a work of art still to deserve mention (Boulby, page 207).

Appropriately Peter Camenzind and Gertrude are both told in the first person and this will be the form of Hesse's greatest novels: Demian, Steppenwolf.

CHAPTER III

The Novels of the Second Period of Hesse's Life

I. *Demian*

Summary

Narrator Emil Sinclair (also the pseudonym under which Hesse published this book) tells us what really amounts to the inner history of his life from the age of ten to around twenty. In the most obvious sense it is a story of adolescent awakening. The first break with his well-off, solid, pious home comes when Emil or Sinclair, as he is more often known, gets involved in paying blackmail to a local tough, Franz Kromer. The latter holds over Sinclair's head the threat of the revelation of a theft imagined by Sinclair for Kromer's approbation but never actually committed.

About the same time Sinclair falls under the spell of Max Demian (usually known as Demian), a very strange and superior fellow student. Demian is, however, more than a fellow adolescent; he is some sort of superior man with the qualities of a *daimon* for Sinclair. Demian frees him from Kromer's hold and serves as the primary agent of Sinclair's initiation into manhood. With Demian's help Sinclair learns to question religious teaching and is urged to *accept* both the good and the evil within himself (and the Gnostic god Abraxas is called in to sanction this) and to transcend the doubts, worries and guilt that harry him.

Sinclair goes away to boarding school and there meets Alfons Beck, a quite different type than Demian. Alfons introduces Sinclair to serious drinking so that he becomes in Alfons' eyes "one hell of a fellow." He falls in love (totally at a distance) with a girl named Beatrice whom he sees, but never meets. He becomes well-acquanted with an ex-seminary student, now a gifted organist and student of the occult and antiquarian, named Pistorius. (Sinclair is eighteen at this time.) Briefly Sinclair himself becomes a sort of "guru" for a confused fellow student named Knauer.

Through much of the book Sinclair, following Demian's advice, is trying to define and express his ideal for himself. This re-evaluation assumes the form of interlaced dreams and paintings. These bring Sinclair's unconscious and undefined aspirations to the surface, to consciousness, and they serve as criteria for judgment on society's values. One such painting is of a face for his contemplation. Alternately the face resembles himself, Demian, Beatrice and finally Demian's mother Eva whom Sinclair only meets toward the end of the book. Meeting her seems to be some sort of consummation. Sinclair and Demian are both also occupied with an old heraldic tablet, above the Sinclair home's door. This represents a sparrow-hawk breaking out of its

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shell. Both this and the face that Sinclair had painted provide the occasion for much protracted discussion and musing of a philosophical and psychological nature.

The story winds its way to an apocalyptic ending. The main characters all sense a strange, awesome happening understood to be a premonition of the beginning of the World War and also the end of an old world and the beginning of a new. Both Demian and Sinclair end up on the battlefield. A shelling, which wounds Sinclair, appears to him like a vision of Eva with stars shooting from her head. Sinclair, wounded, finds himself next to Demian in a hospital. Demian kisses him in the name of his mother Eva and thereafter is seen no more. Before going he assures Sinclair that he (Sinclair) no longer needs him and that by concentrating his will he can now, more from his own strength, live according to his own unique spirit (or daimon).

The Place of Demian in Hesse's Odyssey

Rosshalde marked an advance on the earlier novels in prescribing, instead of mere acceptance, a decisive assumption of the control of one's life. By 1919 when Demian was published (it was finished in 1917) Hesse was pushing this to the Nietzschean level of a superior being's control over life unhampered by bourgeois standards. The years between had been years of international and personal turmoil:
(1) the World War had broken out and Hesse had opposed his native land's part in it; (2) his father had died in 1916; (3) his wife had been committed to an asylum. Hesse himself from May 1916 to November 1917 underwent many hours of psychotherapy by Dr. Joseph B. Lang, a pupil of Jung.

Demian undoubtedly reflects these troubled years and chaos and is full of enigmas engendered, one suspects, more by the psyche's

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complexity than by even Hesse's fruitful imagination.[1] After Rosshalde and the earlier novels Demian exhibits a new departure in Hesse's style and narrative: Demian is subterranean, probing, mythical in character. Rosshalde and its predecessors seem by comparison quite conventional and only incidentally concerned with the great problems of the self and existence. Yet, as was pointed out earlier, there is definite continuity. The theme of self-discovery is present from Peter Camenzind through the other novels. Even in the first four the author was seeking for ways to unlock and free the self. Again, too, there is some continuity in the subject matter of Demian. A sensitive adolescent schoolboy just as in Peter Camenzind, Beneath the Wheel and, to a lesser degree, in Gertrude is once more the focus of the novel.

Demian, all the expected continuity with Hesse's earlier work notwithstanding, does mark a new period in Hesse's life. Heretofore the therapeutic functions of Hesse's fiction have been if not negligible, at least less obtrusive. In Demian Hesse's own sessions with Dr. Lang and his and the world's interest in Freud are amply evident. In a letter Hesse wrote that Demian was written not for the ordinary man but for the despairing.[2] It had its genesis in Hesse's own inner chaos

[1] Hermann Hesse, Demian, trans. Michael Roloff and Michael Lebeck (New York: Bantam Books, 1965), 235. References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 235). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume iii. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, iii, page __).

[2] Unseld, op. cit., p. 25.

and conceivably speaks most readily to those in similar straits. Further, regarding the place of Demian in Hesse's life, Joseph Mileck observes that the ultimate demands of the novel, the "painful isolation" it called for, were too much for Hesse himself at this time and that he was to go on from the Nietzschean ethos of this novel to, at least temporarily, a more "Schopenhauer-like passivity" (Mileck, page 21).

Finally, Hesse terms Demian along with Steppenwolf an "experiment", an effort on his part towards exploring some ideas, by no means a finished or full-elaborated ideal.[3] But our concern is just this, to follow his experiments and route, so to see what Demian in its limited way has to say to our inquiry is most profitable. With Demian Hesse really begins his Weg nach Innen[4] with energy, daring and true Germanic thoroughness.

Like a psychological Descartes the Hesse of Demian aims to start afresh, to be untrammeled by a priori assumptions or the acceptance of any authority. Rather than accept what Aristotle, Plato, Luther, Spinoza, Christianity or Western civilization have to say about the individual's nature and destiny, Emil Sinclair, the narrator of Demian, is coached by Max Demian, himself an exemplar of this approach, to take the helm himself and see what seas he might sail. This Promethean and Herculean effort appropriately coincides with the stress, tumult and awakening of Sinclair's

[3] Unseld, p. 42.

[4] This is the title given to a collection of four of Hesse's stories published in 1931.

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adolescence. Throughout *Demian* there is a juxtaposition or mingling of ordinary elements of human life--adolescence, classrooms, petty thievery, drinking, family life, illness--with mythical and transhuman personalities and events--Demian, his mother Eva, a sort of clairvoyance or extraordinary will on Demian's part, apocalyptic visions. The temptations of the ordinary adolescent to sexual experimentation or liberation, to rejection of family and church authority, to tasting the seduction of secret guilt--all these are used as invitations or stepping-stones to bolder, more Nietzschean endeavors. In its boldness *Demian* is far from the relatively simple and romantic tales of Hesse's earlier period. Hans Giebenrath might admire and envy Hermann Heilner's lofty stance *vis-a-vis* professors and schoolmates and Heilner himself dream of release from the oppressive atmosphere of the bourgeois world; but Demian confidently rejects the accepted morality and gaily turns upside down all that has been or is and intiates Sinclair into the same centrifugal movement, into a "transvaluation of values" as Nietzsche would have said.

Even the most adamantly faithless must have faith in his faithlessness and Demian (or Sinclair under his tutelage; Demian is after all a sort of double for Sinclair, his deeper self) has one basic tenet, one anchor in his swirling self-made world. This tenet is put well in the Prologue:

> . . . each one of whom (men) represents a unique and valuable experiment on the part of nature. . . . But every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world's phenomena intersect, only once in this way and never again. That is why every man's story is important, eternal, sacred; that is why every man, as long as he lives and fulfills the will of nature, is wondrous,

> and worthy of every consideration. In each individual the spirit has become flesh, in each man the creation suffers, within each one a redeemer is nailed to the cross.
>
> Each man's life represents a road toward himself, an attempt at such a road, the intimation of a path. No man has ever been entirely and completely himself (pages 3, 4).

The conviction that each man must aim, at the very least, for full humanity, the fullest possible realization of what he is or is meant to be--this propels all else in this otherwise center-less universe of Demian. Elsewhere, speaking of a coterie of like-minded people, the narrator says:

> The only duty and destiny we acknowledged was that each one of us should become so completely himself, so utterly faithful to the active seed which Nature planted within him, that in living out its growth he could be surprised by nothing unknown to come (pages 123, 124).

To nurture this seed is the one task of each man. And this seed is buried in the unconscious: ". . . humanity's entire store of ideals so far consisted of dreams that had emanated from the unconscious, of dreams in which humanity groped after its intimations of future potentialities"(page 123). Faced with number of enigmas in Demian that resist propositional formulation the reader will have little difficulty in believing that much of it springs from the unconscious and that some has barely surfaced enough to be rationally communicable to others. These enigmas and the exotic jumble of dreams, visions, symbols, ordinary and mythical personae should also warn us that the following of or the search for self in Demian is no mere matter of being "true to oneself" in the sense of the old high school commencement address. The search for self here is to be a quest stripped of all the worn and used procedures, a quest ab initio.

That this quest is not satisfactorily exhausted or completed in Demian is already implied in the text from the novel chosen for the fly leaf (before page 1):

> I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult?

Hesse's quest in Demian could well take a motto for its escutcheon quoted approvingly by Nietzsche: "What saith thy Conscience?--'Thou shalt become what thou art.'"[5]

The Method

Once all a priori help from culture's wisdom is rejected, some alternate procedure might be expected. And there are some guidelines, the matter of one's unconscious. The material of man's unconscious, his dreams, fantasies, desires, are, of course, notoriously intractable and resist precise scientific methodology nor can one look to fiction for that in any case. Yet Demian's method in the quasi-divine madness of this book has empirical if not strictly scientific qualities. He and other spokesmen for the superior man's viewpoint call for "lived ideas" and "living your dreams" with the implicit agreement that only those dreams and desires which survive the test of implementation, some development in the individual, are worthy. The same could be said of Demian's injunction to find one's own laws. In one of Sinclair's first bursts of confidence in Demian he tells him of some of his more heterodox thoughts about good and evil.

[5] Joyful Wisdom, p. 209.

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Demian, ever the relentless tutor, urges Sinclair beyond mere thought:

> I can see that your thoughts are deeper than you yourself are able to express. But since this is so, you know, don't you, that you've never lived what you are thinking and that isn't good. Only the ideas that we actually live are of any value (page 52).

Similarly Pistorius, with an avuncular didacticism that Sinclair comes to reject, tells him:

> I know that you must have dreams that you don't tell me. I don't want to know them. But I can tell you: live those dreams, play with them, build altars to them. It is not yet the ideal but it points in the right direction. Whether you and I and a few others will renew the world someday remains to be seen. But within ourselves we must renew it each day, otherwise we just aren't serious. . . . (page 95).

Dreams are blueprints for new structures to be erected even if, as is likely, they are later to be torn down or replaced. And while we try to live out our ideas and dreams Nature too is using us similarly:

> I was an experiment on the part of Nature, a gamble within the unknown, perhaps for a new purpose, perhaps for nothing, and my only task was to allow this game on the part of primeval depths to take its course, to feel its will within me and make it wholly mine. That or nothing (page 108)!

Every man is an open-ended experiment; the results are not preordained and may often necessitate a new attempt, a new experiment.

As finding one's true self in Demian is more than a moralistic injunction, so it is also more radical, more primary, than discovering once's vocation or function in life. This comes out in the episode where Pistorius and Sinclair have the altercation which terminates their friendship. Pistorius' "cult of mythologies", his antiquarian interest in dead religions, has finally provoked Sinclair

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into a complaint about the abstract character of all this: "What you're telling me there is all so--so damned antiquarian" (page 105). It dawns on the narrator that Pistorius has served him well as a "guru" but is stalled himself in his archeological interests and his desire to be a priest of a new religion. This desire is an intolerable bit of resistance to the deeper will of Nature for him. ". . . each man has his 'function' but none which he can choose himself, define, or perform as he pleases" (page 107). Hesse's (Sinclair's) own words say this best:

> An enlightened man had but one duty--to seek the way to himself, to reach inner certainty, to grope his way forward, no matter where it led. The realization shook me profoundly, it was the fruit of this experience. I had often speculated with images of the future, dreamed of roles that I might be assigned, perhaps as poet or prophet or painter, or something similar.
>
> All that was futile. I did not exist to write poems, to preach or to paint, neither I nor anyone else. All of that was incidental. Each man had only one genuine vocation--to find the way to himself. He might end up as poet or madman, as prophet or criminal--that was not his affair, ultimately it was of no concern. His task was to discover his own destiny--not an arbitrary one--and live it out wholly and resolutely within himself. Everything else was only a would-be existence, an attempt at evasion, a flight back to the ideals of the masses, conformity and fear of one's own inwardness (pages 107, 108).

This driving passage puts the matter unequivocally: to find and be one's basic, true self is the unum necessarium; all else, life's work, vocation, are irrelevant surface phenomena, something to occupy time at the best, their worst a way of evading this one exigency. The whole passage is strongly suggestive of some like passionate passages in Kierkegaard's Sickness Unto Death.[6]

Pistorius admits his inability to follow this strait and narrow

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[6] Fear and Trembling and The Sickness Unto Death, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1941), pp. 198, 199, 201.

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path but points to an example of one who did follow this and what following it brought him:

> Someone who seeks nothing but his own fate no longer has any companions, he stands quite alone and has only cold universal space around him. That is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, you know. There have been martyrs who gladly let themselves be nailed to the cross, but even these were no heroes, were not liberated, for even they wanted something that they had become fond of and accustomed to--they had models, they had ideals.(page 109).

Pistorius recognizes that following out this search to the end means a kind of utter detachment, something like the spiritual nudity the mystics have called for, which is too chilling and austere for him and for most. Sinclair recognizes Pistorius' limitations and the correctness of his intuition:

> Yes, it was beyond imagining. . . . I would gaze into myself and confront the image of my fate. Its eyes would be full of wisdom, full of madness, they would radiate love or deep malice, it was all the same. You were not allowed to choose or desire any one of them. You were only allowed to desire yourself, only your fate (page 109).

Bereft now of Pistorius' help he utters a cry for help: "I cannot take another step alone. Help me" (page 110).

At one time in the course of their discussion Demian tells Sinclair that we have no free will. What he seems to mean is that "Gemüt ist Schicksal" (Mileck, page 115), or that "we are confined to a relatively narrow compass which we cannot break out of" (page 47). Within this compass, of course, as we have been well taught already by Demian, a man can create his own world. A particular disposition, nature, bent is destiny or fate. Novalis comes back to Sinclair with his: "Fate and temperament are two words for one and the same concept" (page 70). ("Schicksal und Gemüt sind Namen eines

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Begriffs," GS, iii, page 178) Except to his own ruin or crippling a man cannot ignore this fate or live otherwise than it dictates. This will be clearer in Steppenwolf but it is already strong in Demian. The self or nature Sinclair is to find and "live" is just such a given, a datum, a destiny, about which he has no choice, except to accept it. Rejecting it, not recognizing it, would be failure. The quest for the self, its discovery, is really a matter of recognizing, knowing one's true self, Selbsterkenntnis. It is there; it is only we who are so often absent, chasing other game in the forest of existence. Each must, through this self-knowledge, find his own laws. The Christian commandments, morality, are for those who have not had the courage to know their own nature and form their own standards. Starting from Sinclair's adolescent sexual temptation, Demian says to this subject probably more than he intends at the moment:

> For instance, for about a year you have had to struggle with a drive that is stronger than any other and which is considered 'forbidden.' The Greeks and many other peoples, on the other hand, elevated this drive, made it divine and celebrated it in great feasts. What is forbidden, in other words, is not something eternal; it can change. Anyone can sleep with a woman as soon as he's been to a pastor with her and has married her, yet other races do it differently, even nowadays. That is why each of us has to find out for himself what is permitted and what is forbidden--forbidden for him. It's possible for one never to transgress a single law and still be a bastard. And vice versa. Actually it's only a question of convenience. Those who are too lazy and comfortable to think for themselves and be their own judges obey the laws. Others sense their own laws within them; things are forbidden to them that every honorable man will do any day in the year and other things are allowed to them that are generally despised (page 53).

There will be more to say of this amoralism in the concluding chapter.

This self-knowledge and the formation in accordance with it of one's own "natural laws" is also termed "becoming human." Pistorius at one time expatiates to Sinclair on the idea that man is a recapitulation, a summary, a microcosm of all of nature. And this is so true that though evolution has brought our species to a level different from that of animals and plants some "men" live on non-human levels "as fish or sheep, worms or angels" because they lack self-consciousness as men (page 89). In explaining all this Pistorius says:

> There's an immense difference between simply carrying the world within us and being aware of it. A madman can spout ideas that remind you of Plato, and a pious little seminary student rethinks deep mythological correspondences found among the Gnostics or in Zoroaster. But he isn't aware of them. He is a tree or stone, at best an animal, as long as he is not conscious. But as soon as the first spark of recognition dawns within him he is a human being. You wouldn't consider all the bipeds you pass on the street human beings simply because they walk upright and carry their young in their bellies nine months! . . . Well, each one of them contains the possibility of becoming human, but only by having an intimation of these possibilities, partially even by learning to make himself conscious of them; only in this respect are these possibilities his (page 89).

The essential humanism espoused here rejects any return to sub-human states and finds nothing attractive in some angelic status. Either is a betrayal of the inner nature Sinclair is to cultivate, free, realize, educate, so intensively and unremittingly.

Gods, Gurus, Demons and Daimons

Above, on page 113, Sinclair's call for help when his relationship with Pistorius had exhausted itself was recorded. Sinclair's life can easily be seen as a series of encounters or meetings with personalities who all in some way assist in his awakening, the awakening to manhood and, more than this, to selfhood.

These personalities, content and certain stylistic devices in Demian remarkably parallel the New Testament book of Revelation. The latter is a revelation from God through angels and St. John, the auditor and seer, of God's way with men, an assurance particularly that he is with them and will triumph over evil. A few more words about the book will justify its inclusion here and explain some further references to it. Revelation is the image-filled account of a visionary, St. John. Strange beasts, angels, devils, mystical numbers all figure in its signs and wonders. Such are characteristics of a whole genre of Biblical work called by the name apocalyptic, i.e., from the Greek to reveal. Among the most frequently used devices are sequences of seven: seven churches, seven seals, seven spirits, seven angels, seven bowls, etc. Angels especially assist in the unfolding of the revelation in a number of tableaux.

Whatever may account for it Demian and Revelation parallel each other, often in opposition, both in general direction and in a number of odd specifics.

If Revelation is the revelation of God's dealings with men, of God to men, then Demian may well be seen as man's revelation to himself, specifically Sinclair's revelation of himself to himself through the agency of the hypostatized characters of the book. One might say it is a psychological or secularized book of revelation. God in the traditional sense of the word or the Biblical sense plays no significant part in the book, in the lives or thoughts of its characters. This makes for the incongruity of what Sinclair says of his carousing and consequent "conversion": "There are numerous ways in which God can make us lonely and lead us back to ourselves" (page 64). Appropriately he says to "ourselves" but rather inappropriately "God" when Nature or Fate would seem more apt given the rather complete preemption of God's functions by these forces in the book.

A variety of personalities respond to Sinclair's cries and needs or providentially appear. Personalities seems proper rather than men, persons or characters in order, for the moment, to leave open the problematical nature of these catalysts of Sinclair's "enlightenment." It is by no means clear or certain that they are merely ordinary human beings whom one is likely to encounter on a playground or in a city street. They act as agents or messengers ("angels" in Biblical terminology) who are "sent" for Sinclair's moments of need. God, in any usual understanding of the term in Christian theology, does not send them but one might say that Nature does. Nature may be taken in the sense it has been accorded in the recent philosophical history of the West where it became the name of a god no longer understood as apart from the universe and a superior person but rather as that great power or force from which all comes in some sense and of which all remains part.

More specifically in Demian, Nature is that center or focus of concentration from which the self's powers come or in which they are rooted and which is also "concerned" about or determined on their unfolding or realization. The individual's self-realization or actualization is so far successful as his will is attuned to the destiny received from Nature. This Nature takes pains to help assure the success of this all important venture, in Demian, by affording providential help or prodding through the advent of these personalities. In Demian these mystagogues or messengers on the face of it seem to be chance encounters and acquaintances the awakening adolescent meets; but much more deeply and in accord with Hesse's intention they are instrumental in Sinclair's self-discovery. These gurus, guides, mentors of Sinclair's inner journey are lodestones for him. They draw him out of one state of life into a new, another state; they embody or enunciate facets of his ideal otherwise only vaguely or not at all sensed in his own self; they are the milestones in Sinclair's path to destiny. They are mystagogues who initiate him not into the Eleusinian mysteries but into the mysteries of the Ich.

Oscar Seidlin sees Hesse's tales as "myths which record the process of awakening to the self" (Mileck, page 158) and it is most plausible that these personalities in Demian are mythological personifications of Sinclair's psychological projections of powers and forces within him. If one thinks of the Greek myths as analogous this is quite probable. There are good reasons for believing that the characters of Demian are self-made projections of a struggling psyche personified. A passage which seems to contradict the whole notion of Sinclair receiving help from anyone or any source really is apropos here. The highly disturbed, almost feverish Knauer senses something of Sinclair's inner life and comes to him for help in his anguish. Sinclair says:

> I can't tell you anything, Knauer. We can't help anybody else. No one helped me either. You have to come to terms with yourself and then you must do what your inmost heart desires. There is no other way. *If you can't find it yourself you'll find no spirits either* (page 99) (Italics mine).

Yet Sinclair himself calls for help, definitely gets it and later really gives Knauer some help too. If the personalities described here are such projections as suggested then all that Sinclair says to Knauer is intelligible. Neither he nor anyone gets help from *outside; he receives help from his own sincere and concetrated effort and anguish over his destiny*. For him who knocks this way, the door will be opened not from the other side but really by the knocker. Demian, Beatrice, Pistorius, and the others, all who seem to help Sinclair at crucial moments, are the crystallizations, the personifications, of his own efforts and desires to achieve his destiny. The chapter in which Knauer appears is entitled "Jacob Wrestling" and later in it Sinclair tells Knauer the secret: "*We create gods* and *struggle* with them, they *bless* us" (page 102).(Italics mine). The individuals of Sinclair's autobiography are Feuerbach-like hypostasizations (the "gods" of the quotation) of his desires, drives, wishes, ideals, destiny.[7] They form a Hessean pantheon created by, in and for the psyche, the self. The self wrestles with them and they singly bless it in varied ways. All this, should it seem strained to the reader, will undoubtedly seem less so as he gains some familiarity with the truly strange and trans-human qualities that people such as Demian and Mother Eva exhibit.

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[7] Demian, . . . es kein Urbild aus der Realität gibt, keinen Freund, der etwa als Muster gedient haben könnte, Demian ist ein Wesensteil des Dichters selbst." Ball, p. 72.

Further, creditable as all this appears to be, it may not be absolutely essential to the task of seeing how the characters of the book contribute to the building up here of Hesse's philosophy or theology of man and his destiny. Who these characters are, where they come from, what they are,--all these considerations can be abstracted from while seeing _what they have to say about our problem_. What is being proposed here is somewhat like the case of the religious skeptic (any skepticism here would be about the "historicity" of the characters) who denies the existence of God or questions it but nevertheless thinks such belief may have value and purpose in the life of the believer. Sinclair "believes" in these characters; what they mean or say to his quest is what is important.

Demian is certainly Sinclair's guru or other self, his _daimon, par excellence_ or, from another viewpoint, "der Verführer Sinclairs" (Ball, page 72). But rather than trying to evaluate the other characters accordingly, they will be considered chronologically since this will correspond to their place in the temporal unfolding of Sinclair's quest. Sinclair meets or encounters to some effect on his self seven such personalities: Franz Kromer, Demian, Alfons Beck, Beatrice, Pistorius, Knauer and Eva. Sinclair's self-revelation to himself, or his self-understanding, hinges on these seven characters these seven projections of his psychic life. His family can be omitted because of the most shadowy part it plays. If the seven characters are thought of as seven _daimons_, it is a clear case of an inversion of the Biblical book's revelation of God to men through seven angels.

Here Demian is revealed to himself through seven daimons who are related philologically to the angels' opposite numbers, devils. Seven, in any case, is the number of perfection and plenitude. Seven such encounters symbolize the thoroughness and completeness of Sinclair's journey into self-knowledge, into his subconscious, the completeness of his attempt to surrender to his fate. Rounding out the series is Frau Eva who makes up what is lacking in the first six of such elements as warmth, love, community.

Franz Kromer

Kromer, the first of Sinclair's enlighteners, illustrates that enlightenment is not always the result of good books, idealistic teachers or lofty-minded friends. As the novel ends Demian says to Sinclair: "Little Sinclair, listen: I will have to go away. Perhaps you'll need me again sometimes, against Kromer or something. . . ." (page 140). Kromer is no angel of light but in the course of the story he definitely plays a role in Sinclair's awakening. Kromer typifies the impact that conscience-less individuals or mindless happenings may have in so human a process. "Burly" Kromer: "His manners were already those of a man and he imitated the walk and speech of young factory workers" (page 8). Kromer initiates Sinclair into the knowledge of good and evil much in the manner of the serpent in Genesis. For Sinclair, coming from the "unsullied and orderly life" of his parents' home and only acquainted with the "darker realm" of drunkards, factory girls, scandal, tramps, robberies by way of an occasional burst of temper, Kromer was live, concrete, existential contact with this darker realm (page 15). The bigger tough both attracts and repels Sinclair and, yielding to the attraction, he attempts to ingratiate himself with Kromer (who, by the way, sought out Sinclair, not vice versa) by fabricating the story of how he robbed an orchard. Kromer uses this revelation to threaten Sinclair with the police and thus brings Sinclair into a kind of bondage to himself. For some time Sinclair lives a nervous life while paying Kromer blackmail and performing humiliating little tasks for him. He suffers from the double life he leads this way--being treated as a good child at home and in actuality being enmeshed in grown-up evil--but he also recognizes in it, with a shudder, the beginning of a new phase of life, a frightening inevitability:

> I felt superior to my father! Momentarily I felt a certain loathing for his ignorance. His upbraiding me for muddy boots seemed pitiful. 'If you only knew' crossed my mind as I stood there like a criminal being cross-examined for a stolen loaf of bread when the actual crime was murder. . . .
>
> This moment was the most significant and lasting of the whole experience. It was the first rent in the holy image of my father, it was the first fissure in the columns that had upheld my childhood, which every individual must destroy before he can become himself. The inner, the essential line of our fate consists of such invisible experiences. . . .
>
> . . . I was forced to observe with a chill in my heart how my world, my good, happy, carefree life, was becoming a part of the past, was breaking away from me, and I was forced to feel how I was being shackled and held fast with new roots to the outside, to the dark and alien world. For the first time in my life I tasted death, and death tasted bitter, for death is birth, is fear and dread of some terrible renewal (pages 15, 16).

Sinclair expresses the universal adolescent experience of being alienated interiorly from the bosom of childhood and family yet not having this recognized and accepted by the family. He sees in it the outlines of a law of human development: the past and earlier phase must be destroyed to make way for new, more demanding, more fulfilling forms of life. In it too he finds what will become more prominent in Hesse's later works, the unavoidable entanglement of death and birth in each other's arms. Death is bitter but "death is birth" too. Given all this Franz Kromer must be given place in the list of agents of Sinclair's Entwicklung, dark angel that he is. Hesse is recognizing in Kromer and similar characters as truly part of himself that demon which, at his parents' insistence, Christoph Blumhardt tried to exorcise in 1892 (Ball, page 69ff and Mileck, pages 6, 60).

Demian

"My salvation came from a totally unexpected source. . . . " (page 22), Sinclair says of his eventual release from the clutches of Kromer. And that salvation was Max Demian. As the title would argue he is the all-embracing mentor or guide in Sinclair's development. If, in contrast to Kromer, he is an angel of light,he is an angel more at home in the pages of Nietzsche than in the Old or New Testaments. In an essay on Hesse's use of names (and there is much playing with names in the novels) Joseph Mileck suggests that Demian is meant to conjure up the diamon of Socrates, "his (Sinclair's) guiding spirit" and that Max could be an abbreviated form of Maximus, the "greatest."[8] The conjecture about Demian and diamon seems well-founded. The eternal discussion about what Socrates actually meant by his *diamon* or *daimon* is not essentially our concern here. Yet a few words from Rollo May do offer pertinent suggestions roughly consistent with Hesse's use of the name Demian and that character's office in Sinclair's life:

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[8] "Names and the Creative Process," Monatshefte, liii (April-May 1961), p. 171.

> The daimonic is not conscience; for conscience is largely a social product, related to the cultural mores and, in psychoanalytic terms, to the power of the superego. The daimonic refers to the power of nature rather than the superego, and is beyond good and evil. Nor is it man's 'recall to himself,' as Heidegger and, later, Fromm have argued, for its source lies in those realms *where the self is rooted in natural forces which go beyond the self and are felt as the grasp of fate upon us*. The daimonic arises from the ground of being rather than the self as such. It is shown particularly in creativity.[9] (Italics mine.)

Demian may not be Sinclair's "recall to himself" but to speak of him as embodying Nature's call to Sinclair or its demands on Sinclair to be his self may be appropriate. Further Demian does not embody conscience in the novel--Sinclair's conscience is at first in conflict with what Demian urges--and he certainly represents a force "beyond good and evil." Though he is not the sole and total personification of Sinclair's *daimon* he is more that than any other character in the novel:

> All I had to do was think of him (Pistorius) and I could be certain that he--or a message from him--would come. I could ask him anything, as I had asked Demian. . . . Only it was not the person of Pistorius nor that of Max Demian that I conjured up and addressed, but the picture I had dreamed and painted, the half-male, half-female dream image of my *daemon*. This being was now, no longer confined to my dreams, no longer merely depicted on paper, but lived within me as an ideal and intensification of my self (page 103) (Italics mine).

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[9] *Love and Will* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1969), p. 124.

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He is more of a personification than others as the deliberate similarity in name indicates and because of his constantly reappearing function as such a guiding spirit, a visible representation of Sinclair's own "ideal and intensification" of his self. Other guides in Demian only serve Sinclair temporarily. Studying the texts in the novel itself will tell us more of his place in Sinclair's life than theoretical a priori discussions.

In a later section attention will be directed to the specific tasks that Sinclair's self-development (through his mentors) enjoins on him so a review here of Demian's significance will not pre-empt that discussion. Demian first appears in the second chapter entitled "Cain." He enters as a new student in school, the son of a recently-widowed mother, with a host of unusual characteristics:

> . . . I could not avoid noticing him, nor could anyone else. This remarkable student seemed much older than he looked; in fact, he did not strike anyone as a boy at all. In contrast to us, he seemed strange and mature, like a man, or rather like a gentleman. He was not popular, did not take part in our games. . . .
>
> I couldn't say that he made a favorable impression on me; on the contrary, I had something against him: he seemed too superior and detached, his manner too provocatively confident, and his eyes gave him an adult expression--which children never like--faintly sad, with flashes of sarcasm. . . . I can only say that he was in every respect different from all the others, was entirely himself, with a personality all his own which made him noticeable even though he did his best not to be noticed; his manner and bearing was that of a prince disguised among farm boys, taking great pains to appear one of them.(pages 22, 23).

After a class in which the story of Cain was explained Demian politely attaches himself to Sinclair on the way home and offers Sinclair an amazing exegesis of his own which effectually turns the story in Genesis upside down. Briefly, instead of Cain's mark being a protective consequence of fratricide, Cain has the mark, the sign to begin with:

> It is much more likely that he struck people as faintly sinister, perhaps a little more intellect and boldness in his look than people were used to. This man was powerful: you would approach him only with awe (page 25).

And, so went Demian's interpretation, people were afraid of him, his family, and eventually elaborated stories about him, among them that he had committed a murder. Sinclair is horrified and fascinated at this free-wheeling approach to the Bible and this new understanding of the old story occupies his dreams and thoughts. It occurs to him about Demian:

> . . . what an unusual meaning he had given the mark Cain bore on his forehead, how his eyes, his remarkable adult eyes had lit up, the question flashed through my mind whether Demian himself was not a kind of Cain. Why does he defend Cain unless he feels an affinity with him (page 27)?

This whole discussion of Cain and its resonance throughout the book is certainly provocative and murky. In Demian's interpretation the important element in the story is Cain's distinctiveness; the murder is somewhat peripheral. Cain obviously is to typify the Übermensch ideal which Demian propagandizes for and which Sinclair will come to see as his destiny. Interestingly the sign which marks Cain and which Demian recognizes on Sinclair is also paralleled in Revelation. Consistent with the inversion of these matters in Demian the sign in Revelation is on those opposed to God, those who worship and follow the beast: Revelation 13:16-18; 14:9. Demian's Übermensch ideal is similarly in its most obvious meaning a substitution of individual autonomy for God's hegemony. Before all of Demian's words and suggestions catch fire in Sinclair there will be a momentary retreat, rather exceptional in this novel. Recall how different it was in the earlier Hesse novels: there retreat and withdrawal were the usual reactions of the protagonists (e.g., Camenzind and Kuhn) to life.

Liberated by Demian from Kromer, Sinclair rather promptly "strains to forget" his savior, confesses the Kromer affair to his parents and is welcomed back as the Prodigal to the "Edenic world" at home (pages 36, 37). He regards this, retrospectively, as a retreat from Demian and his world, Demian the tempter and the liberator. (Note once again the similarities of Demian and the serpent in the garden.) Instead of replacing his dependence on Kromer with dependence on or trust in Demian the Nietzschean novice returns to the "security of a pious, sheltered childhood (page 38). Fear of Demian had momentarily halted his steps in Demian's direction:

> For Demian would have been far more exacting than my parents; he would have tried to make me more independent by using persuasions, exhortation, mockery, and sarcasm. I realize today that nothing in the world is more distasteful to a man than to take the path that leads to himself (page 38).

Sinclair's first encounters with adolescent problems and experiences such as sexuality, religion, drinking, schoolboy cameraderie, interract with or intertwine with further elements in his initiation by Demian and others to form a secularized sanctity: the realization of destined selfhood.

Sinclair's relation with Demian tapers off after this for a time but not without leaving haunting and nagging suggestions in Sinclair's mind. Demian remains in the background of all the conflicts that make the scaffolding of Sinclair's adolescence. Despite his

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"retreat" to family and childhood and his parents collusion "in supporting my hopeless attempts to deny reality (e.g., his awakening sexuality) and to continue dwelling in a childhood world," there is still openness on his part to whatever entered his life and impelled him forward (pages 40, 41). He recognizes that "What Franz Kromer had once been was now part of myself" (page 41).

For a few years following this Sinclair has only the most casual and infrequent contact with Demian. Looking back at one incident during the time he remembers Demian as combining a host of complementary qualities: boyish and adult; masculine and feminine; neither young nor old; handsome and repulsive--"unimaginably different from all the rest of us" (page 43). Stories circulate that he was Jewish or heathen or atheist or his mother's lover.

Through some delay Demian, though slightly older, comes to be in Sinclair's confirmation class. Their contact at this time enables Demian to play his part in the typically adolescent problems of free will as these enter Sinclair's thought. Demian tells Sinclair that we don't have free will "even though the pastor makes believe we do" (page 46). Subsequently he explains his view that men have freedom to will and to do within the limits and needs of nature or destiny: "We have a wider scope, greater variety of choice, and wider interests than an animal. But we, too, are confined to a relatively narrow compass which we cannot break out of" (page 47). In religious matters Sinclair attests that he himself was generally reverent despite "cracks" that had begun to appear in his faith (page 49). But some "new" theology is inevitably forthcoming from classmate Demian along the lines of the latter's earlier exegesis of the Cain story. He commends the unrepentant thief on the cross as a man of "character":

> He doesn't give a hoot for 'conversion', which to a man in his position can't be anything but a pretty speech. He follows his destiny to its appointed end and does turn coward and forswear the devil, who has aided and abetted him until then (pages 50, 51).

A more fundamental complaint of Demian's against Christianity will figure large in Hesse's later works. He objects to the--to him--narrow identification of the Old and New Testament God with the "good, noble, fatherly, beautiful, elevated, sentimental."

> But the world consists of something else besides. And what is left over is ascribed to the devil, this entire slice of world, this entire half is suppressed and hushed up. In exactly the same way they praise God as the father of all life but simply refuse to say a word about our sexual life on which it's all based, describing it whenever possible as sinful, the work of the devil. I have no objection to worshiping this God Jehovah, far from it. But I mean we ought to consider everything sacred, the entire world, not merely this artificially separated half (page 51)!

This stance beyond good and evil will be further fortified by Pistorius. Amid all this initiation of Sinclair into this religion beyond Christianity, Demian keeps urging Sinclair to live and act:

> Clever talk is absolutely worthless. All you do in the process is to lose yourself. And to lose yourself is a sin. One has to be able to crawl completely inside oneself, like a tortoise (page 54).

This is the last Sinclair and Demian see of each other for some years as Sinclair goes off to a boarding school. While away at the school he alternately longs for Demian and reproaches him for having aided in the destruction of his childhood.

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When they meet again, Sinclair has taken up the wilder side of student life, drinking and carousing while retaining his burning memories of Demian. They have a brief encounter during a holiday visit home over some wine and Demian quickly senses Sinclair's new closeness to Bacchus. Demian commends the "bacchanalian element:"

> Yes, for one night, with burning torches, a real wild drunk (page 72)!

But he tells Sinclair that Faust would hardly spend his evenings stooped over a bar: "Well, not everybody's Faust" is Sinclair's curt retort. Though not happy, therefore, over the Philistine side of Sinclair's drinking, Demian sees his present state as possibly a hedonistic preparation for a higher life, somewhat like the pattern of St. Augustine. He doesn't think that destiny or nature can be thwarted completely this way:

> . . . neither of us knows why you happen to be drinking wine at this moment. That which is within you and directs your life knows already. It's good to realize that within us there is someone who knows everything, wills everything, does everything better than we ourselves. . . . (page 72).

Once Pistorius has served his purposes in Sinclair's life, the latter calls out for help (as was noted above) and Demian and he shortly afterwards meet once again. Demian's words to Sinclair at this juncture speak of Nietzschean withdrawal from the herd and ultimately of the possibility of genuine communion to replace the fraternities, choral societies and nations of the present (page 115). While urging Sinclair on to a type of splendid isolation he illustrates by the examples of Jesus and Nietzsche (a juxtaposition truly likely to surprise the reader), he paradoxically sees coming a deeper communion,

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a new humanity (page 116). The fulfillment of self, the true community, both seem bound up with Demian's mother Eva. To her Demian now leads Sinclair as to the more ultimate embodiment of his fate and his fulfillment. The significance of this murky mother figure who is to reappear so much in later books will have to be dealt with further on in this exposition.

Beyond leading Sinclair to mother Eva Demian also clarifies any doubt in the reader's mind that he is Sinclair's other or deeper self. While both lie in an army hospital during the war Demian kisses Sinclair boodbye and his own reality as Sinclair's *daimon* illuminates the last pages of the book:

> I have to go away. Perhaps you'll need me again sometime, against Kromer or something. If you call me then I won't come crudely, on horseback or by train. You'll have to listen within yourself, then you will notice that *I am within you*. Do you understand? (page 140) (Italics mine).

Again, in place of God who is with man in *Revelation*, in *Demian* it is one's true self. Demian promises Sinclair to be always available, always near. In *Revelation* those who have received God's revelation are assured of his abiding presence and comfort: "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them. And they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (*Revelation* 21:3-4). Sinclair's own *daimon* will be present with him to console and strengthen.[10] Sinclair expresses his own sense of fulfillment in the final words of the story when he speaks of his identity with Demian: ". . . my own image, now completely resembling him, my brother, my master" (page 141). With this Sinclair has become his ideal, a Demian. He is now an Übermensch of the Demian type and by the fact of being so independent ready to strain toward the self-realization more totally embodied in Eva.

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[10] All biblical references are quoted from *The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, ed. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

Alfons Beck

As if reflecting the alternating pull and attraction of Geist and Natur which are to become increasingly evident in Hesse and his writing, Sinclair's third encounter, his third guide, is once again the more earthy type such as was Franz Kromer. This is Alfons Beck, "the oldest boy in our boardinghouse" who comes literally out of the mists of a "foggy dusk" as Sinclair stands in a park (pages 58, 59). Alfons is strong; it is thought that he has intimidated the teachers and he is "the hero of many a student rumor" (page 59). He it is who introduces Sinclair to drink; Sinclair learns quickly and is flattered at becoming in Alfons' eyes such a "hell of a fellow" and "damned clever little bastard" (page 60). Alfons' attempts also to initiate Sinclair into rebellion and romancing succeed in respect to the first. Breaking the rules of the school, talking about sleeping with girls and getting drunk; all this is "delicious . . . for me it smacked of rebellion" (page 61).

To actually become intimate with girls in the way in which Beck is interested in them, Sinclair feels, is "out of my league. I hadn't experienced anything, certainly nothing worth telling" (page 60). The other lessons are well-learned, however, and Sinclair becomes an habitué of the bars, carousing with "the boys," well on his way to expulsion from school. Some conscience or ideal of friendship and love prevents Sinclair from sharing the easier girls his friends visit. He remains lonely for a genuine friend, a love, amid all the "false communion" of the wilder kind of student life. In a rather attenuated sense love will come to him in the next encounter. Alfons successfully reveals to Sinclair that part of himself to which the life of _Wein, Weib und Gesang_ appeals. And Sinclair tastes that part of himself sufficiently to realize it is not for him.

Beatrice

> Oh, when I was in love with you,
> Then I was clean and brave,
> And miles around the wonder grew
> How well did I behave.
> (A.E. Housman, A Shropshire Lad, xviii)

Housman, somewhat of a contemporary of Hesse, puts simply the sort of influence that Beatrice exerts on Sinclair. It is while away at boarding school that Sinclair sees her in the same park where he had first met his last guide or devil, Alfons Beck. With Beatrice an angel of light appears on the scene and she initiates a new phase in Sinclair's life. Beatrice is an arbitrarily chosen name given by Sinclair who never approached her or addressed a single word to her (page 66). But she does faintly resemble a pre-Raphaelite painting of Dante's Beatrice which Sinclair has seen. He "did but see her passing by" and yet he loves her. Her appearance combines usual Hessean qualities: she is tall, slender, mature yet boyish, ethereal and soulful (page 66).

He feels himself an acolyte worshiping at her shrine and just having seen her and what she typifies for him in purity and spirituality draws him away from the life of "bars and nocturnal exploits" (page 67). The new "world of light" she shows to him is this time, however, not a reversion or retreat to mother and childhood. He claims it is to some extent his own creation, "invented and desired on my own, with responsibility and self-control" (page 67).

Among the new practices or habits he takes up in his new life is painting.[11] He attempts several times to paint from memory an image of Beatrice. Resorting to his fantasies, he finally produces a painting. What has eventuated is "more like a boy's face" again: "half male, half female, ageless, as purposeful as it was dreamy, as rigid as it was secretly alive" (page 69). It becomes a sort of ikon in his room. One cannot but see in such oft-repeated descriptions one element of Hesse's ideal--some figure or personality that would combine all the best of personal qualities, no matter how apparently divergent, some union of opposites. Finally it dawns on him that the portrait is really of Demian. But after hanging it in the window to get the effect of the sun through it, it seems to him to really be his own self, "my fate or my daemon" (page 70). He has brought his ideal closer to consciousness and definition. In Revelation John's visions serve to relay God's message of consolation and strength to his hearers. Demian's dreams are made visible by him in the paintings in which he attempts to capture their harmony of disparate qualities.

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[11] Hesse began painting with water color in 1916 in conjunction with his psychoanalysis and it remained a lifetime diversion.

To bring them to the state wherein they can be depicted at all means that he is assimilating the messages coming to him from his unconscious. Dreams, paintings, persons all serve to bring him closer to an understanding of his fate.

Beatrice, like other of Sinclair's guides, has triggered a recognition of himself or a further insight into what is his personal ideal: as well as responding to the coarse and rough life of Alfons Beck he is capable of responding fervently to the ethereal purity and spirituality of this once-glimpsed Beatrice.

Pistorius

Piqued by Demian's chiding about his drinking and once again spurred to achieve his ideals ("Why was that so very difficult?" comes in at this time (page 80)) Sinclair experiences a turbulent, restless period during his last year in preparatory school. He expects and hopes somehow to come across his ideal personified, conceived of largely as "she," the "beloved." His unresolved, unfulfilled state reduces him to thoughts of suicide (page 82). Suicide suggests itself to a number of Hessean heroes as it did to Hesse himself during his adolescence. But:

> Just then I found a strange refuge--'by chance,' as they say--though I believe there is no such thing. If you need something desperately and find it, this is not an accident; your own craving and compulsion leads you to it (page 82).

Once again Nautre is in collusion with one's own "craving" and external circumstances to respond to a need. The response this time takes the form of a character named Pistorius. Sinclair is eighteen at the time. Once more, this new man on the scene reflects elements of Hesse's own autobiography. Pistorius, like Hesse, is the son of a pastor, "fabulously respectable," had attended a school preparatory to the ministry and had left this and was a musician, in this case an organist (page 86). In this unkempt, proud and hostile posture, he is "a full-grown eccentric" (pages 83, 92).

The strains of his organ music coming out of a locked church sound to Sinclair like "the answer to a prayer," an assurance of a new guide on his interior voyage. His way of playing Bach and other composers was full of "faith, surrender, and devotion:"

> Yet not devout after the fashion of churchgoers and pastors, devout the way pilgrims and mendicants were in the Middle Ages, devout with that unconditional surrender to a universal feeling that transcends all confessions. . . all of it expressed what was in the musician's soul: longing, a most intimate atonement with the world (Ergreifen der Welt, GS, v 3, page 192) and a violent wrenching loose, a burning hearkening to one's own dark soul, an intoxicating surrender and deep curiosity about the miraculous (page 83).[12]

This description of Pistorius' music's effect defies any simplification and well indicates the diffused character of Sinclair's maturing ideal. After listening furtively to the music several times Sinclair finally forces his company on the organist in a tavern and remarks to Pistorius on the "amoral" quality of the music which appeals to him (page 84). As a result he discovers that the reluctant recluse, like Demian earlier, is a devotee of Abraxas, the god of good and evil.

Apart from the foregoing it is possible to pinpoint more precisely the purposes Pistorius serves in Sinclair's self-discovery. 1) An evening spent wordlessly with Pistorius in his quarters watching the configurations made by the flames in the fireplace--"Fire worship was by no means the most foolish thing ever invented. . ."(page 86)--results in a "certain strength and joy, an intensification of my self-awareness (eine Steigerung meines Gefühls von mir selbst, GS, iii, page 198)" for Sinclair. More especially this means that a surrender to Nature's "irrational strangely confused formations produces in us a feeling of inner harmony with the force responsible for these phenomena" (page 88). This kind of experience aids in the unfolding of personality by reminding us that personality should not be too narrowly defined; that, in a sense, it can and should recapitulate all of human evolution and evidence man's identification with all of nature. 2) Further, Pistorius, by finding something of value in all of Sinclair's thoughts and dreams, facilitates his movement along the way of self-affirmation as Demian had initially done. "Abraxas does not take exception to any of your thoughts, any of your dreams. Never forget that. But he will leave you once you've become blameless and normal" (page 93). 3) And, finally, most briefly, Pistorius argues the need of some community: "There has to be community, there must be a cult and intoxicants, feasts and mysteries. . . ." (page 94). This will receive more development elsewhere.

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[12] "Atonement" is misleading. Ergreifen der Welt means rather "a grasping of the world."

Near the conclusion of their relationship Sinclair can recognize that Pistorius has not confronted him with astonishingly new things but has hammered away at earlier directives with good result:

> . . . all of them helped me to form myself, all of them helped to peel off layers of skin, to break eggshells, and after each blow I lifted my head a little higher, a little more freely, until my yellow bird pushed its beautiful raptor's head out of the shattered shell of the terrestrial globe (pages 89, 90).

This last is a reference to the emblem of a bird breaking out of a shell which sits over the entrance to the Sinclair home and which Demian especially makes symbolic of Sinclair's whole quest. Sinclair must break through the encasing shell of bourgeois values before he can realize his identity and ideal, before he can be a Demian. Sinclair's ultimate impatience with Pistorius' antiquarianism and didacticism plus some shock at his drinking all conspire to tell him that he has outlived the possibility of further help from Pistorius.

> He had led me along a path that would transcend and leave even him, the leader, behind. . . . (page 106).
>
> His function was perhaps to lead men to themselves as he had led me. To provide them with the unprecedented, the new gods, was not in him (page 107).

All of this sits well with the supposition that Pistorius was modeled on Hesse's analyst, Dr. Lang.

Knauer

The short episode involving Knauer, a fellow student of Sinclair's, indicates that Sinclair was himself to help lead others to themselves too. Weak, distraught Knauer approaches Sinclair for help in the midst of a tormenting battle for sexual continence. He thinks Sinclair to be a spiritualist, a theosophist or, at least, a dabbler in white magic; he himself has apparently tried all these plus yoga in his unsuccessful efforts to banish all sexual temptation (page 97). He sounds like a true representative of the restless German in his anxiety and guilt over this. Sinclair does not share his worry about continence though he himself is thus far free from contact with women. He offers Knauer little help, dashes cold water on Knauer's expectation of contacting powerful spirits and says: "You have to come to terms with yourself and then you must do what your inmost heart desires. There is no other way" (page 99). Knauer leaves disappointed and convinced that Sinclair is a depraved hypocrite.

Later, one dream-ridden night, Sinclair wakens and restlessly roams about the town ending up "under the sway of some strange compulsion" at a rising new building (page 101). To his astonishment there is Knauer who is no less astounded: "My God, Sinclair, where did you come from?" More collected, it dawns on Sinclair: "You must have called me" (page 102). Knauer was about to commit suicide or was thinking seriously of it. Sinclair comforts him ever so little and for some time afterward Knauer clings to him "like a faithful servant or a dog" (page 103). Knauer continues his interest in the esoteric and initiates Sinclair into some of it of it with the result that the latter feels both have gained. The point of the whole encounter with Knauer seems to be primarily to highlight the inappropriateness of Knauer's nervous approach. More positively it affirms Sinclair's possibilities for leading others and that in learning both the teacher and the taught learn:

> Yet it was strange that he would often come to me with his puzzling and stupid questions when I was faced with a puzzle of my own to which his fanciful notions and requests frequently provided a catchword and the impetus for a solution. Often he was a bother and I would dismiss him peremptorily; yet I sensed that he, too, had been sent to me, that from him, too, came back whatever I gave him, in double measure; he, too, was a leader for me--or at least a guidepost. The occult books and writing he brought me and in which he sought his salvation taught me more than I realized at the time (page 103).

Eva

A Hesse letter of February 23, 1935, attests that he began the study of Indian religious thought as early as the first decade of the century. More intensive study followed while he was writing Siddhartha. All that we have seen thus far of Sinclair's quest is strongly suggestive of the general approach of Hindu religious thought. Further, in its aims, Hesse's thought is closely parallel to one particular school of Hindu thought, Samkhya-Yoga. R.C. Zaehner has emphasized in several books that whereas the religions of Semitic origins (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) begin with God and his revelation to man, his demands on them, the religions of Indian provenance (Hinduism, Buddhism, especially) "start with the idea of the human soul."

> Basically they are not interested in what we would call God at all; they are interested in the realization here and now of a state of existence in which time and space and causation are transcended and obliterated; they aim at the realization, the felt experience of immortality.[13]

Though paralleling each facet of this description in Hesse would not be possible, still, in a more general way, it indicates both what is being sought in Demian and the methodology: one starts with the human soul or, in this case, person or self, and goes from there toward its realization which may be called salvation. "Each man had only one genuine vocation--to find the way to himself" (page 108).

Possibly, more even than the approach, the end of all this is coincidental with the goal of Samkhy-Yoga:

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[13] The Comparison of Religions (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, pp. 16, 17.

> Someone who seeks nothing but his own fate no longer has any companions, he stands quite alone and has only cold universal space around him. . . . But the man who only seeks his destiny has neither models nor ideals, has nothing dear and consoling (page 109).

Pistorius, here speaking, goes on to point up how both he and Sinclair at the moment were failing this goal in having the satisfaction and consolation of each other, someone to whom they might whisper that "solitude is sweet" (Cowper). Elsewhere we have the picture of Demian, the adept, sitting in what seems to be total self-absorption:

> I saw my friend sitting upright, . . . I first thought he had his eyes closed but then saw they were open. . . . The real Demian, however, looked like this, as primeval, animal, marble, beautiful and cold, dead yet secretly filled with fabulous life. And around him this quiet emptiness, this ether, interstellar space, this lonely death (page 55):

With this in mind and looking back at the steps and goal toward which his various mystagogues had been leading Sinclair, a remarkable similarity to the goal of Samkhya-Yoga as described by Zaehner is notable:

> In terms of experience 'salvation' or 'release' for the adept of the Samkhya means realizing oneself as an eternal being in isolation. It is not the loss of personality described by Tennyson, but rather the realization of personality--paurusya or purusa-hood--in isolation from all that is other than itself. It is what Proust referred to as the awakening of the 'second self'--'our real self which often had seemed dead for a long time yet was not dead altogether'--a 'self' totally distinct from the ego, the reality of which Proust, when in this beatific condition, almost doubted (The Comparison of Religion, page 73).

The second self, in Demian calling to Sinclair from early in the book, is Demian with whom finally on the last page he feels identical. Pistorius himself, as is apparent in the story, found the ideal hard to take, too demanding.

The enigmatic Mutter Eva, Frau Eva, of the last chapters, takes Sinclair beyond the sheer individualism of the ideal presented to this point. While this much may be said, it should be emphasized prior to any development of this that the relation between Demian and Eva, that is, their significance for Sinclair is not unambiguously clear. How they are distinguished in relation to his development and life is not sharply defined. Both seem at times to be in some sense the ultimate goal of Sinclair's journey though there are distinctly counter currents in the novel also, currents which protest against making any ideal final. Any attempt to distinguish them clearly and simply is bound to do injustice to the symbolic and psychological character of the novel, will be, in other words, some reduction of the inherent mystery and ambiguity of the story.

Demian, in any case, represents an ideal of the self given to Sinclair which is redolent of both Nietzsche and the Indian tradition as has been noted. Only such a person, a man of independence and originality, not indebted to or bound to the past and tradition, his own man insofar as that is possible, is, according to the novel, strong enough and unflinching enough to pursue an ideal of self-realization. Others settle for a kind of self-realization really packaged for them by society and institutions. Understanding the work this way Demian is for Sinclair the ideal of a superman, the rare individual who can actually seek and achieve his own self-realization. Hence, to have become a Demian, as is said of Sinclair ultimately, means he is now ready for the more ultimate quest for self-realization. Only one who has shaken the trammels of society and even of history in some sense is fit to scale the peak of self-realization; once that has been done he will be fit for union with Eva, the embodiment of a more nearly ultimate self-realization. His attainment of this will be seen as a matter of exercising the superior will forged in his education as a Demian. Demian and the others to a lesser degree have helped Sinclair form his own god, Abraxas, and his own morality, the pursuit of whatever his nature or destiny tells him.

Two aspects of Mutter Eva call for consideration:

1) Besides being the ultimate for which being a Demian is a preparation, Eva embodies an ideal beyond the individualistic ideal of the former. She is "ein Sinnbild meines Innern" (GS, iii, page 127), "Whose sole purpose was to lead me more deeply into myself" (page 127). Sinclair's first reactions and observations on meeting Frau Eva indicate the direction in which she improves and amplifies the ideal previously presented to him:

> This, then, was the new guise in which my fate revealed itself to me, no longer stern, no longer setting me apart, but fresh and joyful!
>
> Her voice and words resembled her son's and yet were quite different. Everything was riper, warmer, more self-evident (page 119).

In painting her features earlier, his "dream image", and now in seeing her, Demian has been expanding the ideal learned thus far, the narrower, more individualistic and one-sided ideal, into something more comprehensive even involving a social character (page 111). Earlier, before meeting Demian's mother, on a visit to their former home, he had seen a photograph of her and recognized her:

> That was she, the tall, almost masculine woman who resembled her son, with maternal traits, severity, passion; beautiful and alluring, beautiful and unapproachable, daemon and mother, fate and beloved (page 111).

As frequently in Hesse she suggests the hermaphrodite, combining in herself not merely masculine and feminine qualities but the attributes of uniqueness and universality, aloofness and attraction. She makes up the qualities lacking in Demian; she is "fresh," "joyful" and "warmer" (page 119). While retaining the strength and masculinity of Demian himself, she is feminine, mother, Heimat. The teaching of Sinclair's earlier mentors, especially Demian and Pistorius, had been cold, individualistic despite exhortations to oneness with nature and approbation of passionate yearning. The sterner lines of the portrait which Demian helped Sinclair to dream and draw, the demanding "excelsior" of the Nietzschean standard, is now humanized without being compromised or vulgarized. His dream image had always included opposites, had been "purposeful as it was dreamy" (page 69). The feminine may be seen as both the answer to his sexual desire and the attracting force beyond the Übermensch ideal which helps motivate and spur him all through his quest. Throughout his dream had been to one day embrace his androgynous vision, this lover, brother and mother; this dream was "the most important and enduringly significant" of his life (page 79). It had filled him with "ecstasy and horror," bliss and fear (page 79).

> How often I dreamed that I stepped beneath the heraldic bird into our house, wanted to draw my mother to me and instead held the great, half-male, half-maternal woman in my arms, of whom I was afraid but who also attracted me violently (page 93).

Earlier in Peter Camenzind and Beneath the Wheel the protagonist had returned to home, to the place of origins, disappointed or crushed by life or tired by his efforts to participate in it and this was recognized as a retreat, a retrogression. Here the return to the Heimat, to the mother, is a legitimate regaining of something which had to be renounced before maturity could be realized. Heimat here is within, the realization of a kind of oneness with a host of opposties which all meet in the mother-image.

Sinclair will be ready for union with her when his love for her is strong enough, strong enough to evoke infallibly a response in her. Eva tells him as she senses his longing for the culminating union with her:

> Love must not entreat . . . or demand. Love must have the strength to become certain within itself. Then it ceases merely to be attracted and begins to attract. Sinclair, your love is attracted to me. Once it begins to attract me, I will come. I will not make a gift of myself, I must be won (page 126).

Eva tells him two symbolic stories, one of a youth in love with a planet, and the other of unrequited love. In both he is reminded of the necessity of having faith in his desired destiny and of willing that destiny, that desired love. She is encouraging him to greater faith in his destiny, a greater willingness to seek and embrace it; a certain infallibility attaches to such force of will (pages 126-127). As a recognition of his effort and an encouragement Frau Eva at their first actual meeting gives him the right to use her name:

> I have a few friends, she said with a smile, a few very close friends who call me Frau Eva. You shall be one of them if you wish (page 121).

Such husbanding of a name for a few select souls is very biblical and found in Revelation where it is also a reward to the faithful:

> To him who overcomes, I will give the hidden manna, and I will give him a white pebble, and upon the pebble a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives it (2:17).

Sinclair seems to reach the point of strength of will whereby Eva will come to him but when he thus "calls" her Demian comes instead on her behalf, ilustrating again the somewhat confusing interpenetration of the two personalities in their relation to Sinclair (pages 136-137).

2) The notion of Mother Eva as symbolizing further the expansion of Sinclair's ideal to include love, communion with other men, community, a new world community, in fact, comes into the story shortly before the end. Similarly the concluding chapters of Revelation concern themselves with depicting "a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1), the New Jerusalem. Not only is there this similarity but the "holy city, the New Jerusalem" is described also in terms of a woman:

> And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband (21:2).

Again the contrast too: the New Jerusalem, the bride, comes out of heaven; the image of Eva had its ultimate origin in Sinclair's psyche. One has already been so filled with Demian's Nietzschean ideal that the effect of this shift in emphasis is not completely successful. The major part of the narrative is concerned more with transcending the rest of men, the herd, than in understanding them or relating to them in any benevolent way. Mother Eva and some of the events toward the end of the narrative all try to balance the individualist emphasis of the earlier part of the novel. The author could have the satisfaction of pointing to this expansion of the book's earlier and narrower ideal but the overwhelming impression Demian leaves lies in its commendation of the Nietzschean ideal. Still to give the author his due it must be said that the Mother motif is certainly not extrinsic to his concern from here on; what seems a bit strained and not wholly integrated till the later novels is the effort to bring in, under the mother rubric, a concern for the wider world.

Strange omens and finally news brought by Demian confirm a war with Russia and soon the two are involved in the military. Their world has expanded or even exploded:

> How strange that the stream of the world was not to bypass us any more, that it now went straight through our hearts, and that now or very soon the moment would come when the world would need us, when it would seek to transform itself (page 136).

The somewhat awkward ending in which the lives of Demian and Sinclair are caught up in the stream of history and in which Frau Eva comes to symbolize a new world is not totally without anticipation earlier in Demian. The eccentric solitary Pistorius had alluded to the need of a community for the religion of which he would be a priest (page 94). Demian too had implicitly referred to a purified and improved notion of community in ridiculing the false communion found in fraternities and the ordinary social groups whose members were drawn together out of herd instinct from "fear and dread" (page 115). More positively Demian was to illustrate a higher notion of community in the group that gathered at his home. Its members felt themselves to be prototypes of a new kind of community which would be a pattern for a new mankind built of similar individuals all following their fate relentlessly:

> Our task was to represent an island in the world, a prototype perhaps, or at least a prospect of a different way of life. I, who had been isolated for so long, learned about the companionship which is possible between people who have tasted complete loneliness (page 122).

This model for the world-to-be is built around Frau Eva: "It seemed as though all thinking emanated from her and in the end went back to her" (page 125). She supports it as a "universal mother" (page 121). Sinclair who had found his family life so oppressive during his period of change recovers the family pattern here, the more appealing to him inasmuch as it fulfills his ideals more and is freely chosen by him.

While the prospect of war frightens them all, they see it as a fated prelude to a new world: "The new world has begun and the new world will be terrible for those clinging to the old" (page 135). This is reiterated later when Sinclair senses that the participants in the war feel dimly too that they are involved in a drive toward a new world:

> Deep down, underneath, something was taking shape. Something akin to a new humanity (page 138).

The author's thoughts about this war and the odd and sudden participation of his two idividualists in that institutionalized herd, the army, suggest possibly the extreme of the beyond good and evil towards which Nietzsche and much Indian philosophy too direct their followers. Possibly the participation, so apparently unquestioning--unlike Hesse's own views toward the World War--in the war would be understandable in terms of the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. In

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this most popular Hindu classic the prince Arjuna who has hesitations about fighting against his relatives in a war is enjoined to do it as his duty by the Lord Krishna speaking through his charioteer.

> If any man thinks he slays, and if another thinks he is slain, neither knows the ways of truth. The Eternal in man cannot kill: the Eternal in man cannot die[14] (2:19).

Life and death, killing and being killed, are all the same ultimately, and there is no basis for conscience qualms about participation. There is, however, no indication in the immediate texts of such an influence; it can only be suggested on the basis of Hesse's general debt to the East.

Fighting and killing are also, in the text, justified by being given a psychological interpretation. Instead of being the expression of national pride and hate they are seen as the necessary purification prefacing a new world. Men are really killing off elements in themselves hostile to the new world:

> . . . their bloody task was merely an irradiation of the soul, of the soul divided within itself, which filled them with the lust to rage and kill, annihilate and die so that they might be born anew.(page 138).

Again, a lofty and non-historical view of the war.

One last episode in the war relates Mother Eva to this new world being born. Just before Sinclair is wounded on the battlefield a mighty goddess figure bearing the features of Mother Eva appears in the sky with stars in her hair and a stream of millions of people is swallowed up into her (page 139). Surely the people signify in some

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[14] The Bhagavad Gita, trans. Juan Mascarŏ (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 50.

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minimal sense at least a community or segment of humanity. The tableau is consistent with the traditional Biblical conception of Eve, Eva, as the mother of all the living. More specifically the strange figure in Revelation 12, variously interpreted as the Church or Mary, has remarkable similarities to the vision Sinclair sees on the battlefield:

> And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. . . . (12:1).

Unraveling these most cryptic aspects of Demian might possibly shed more light on her place in Sinclair's self-realization but the task seems more one for the psychoanalyst than the theological critic. Obvious enough seems to be her identification with a great mass of people, some verification of the view that she symbolizes communion and community, a harmony of men.

One last note about Frau Eva must be adverted to here. Eva's ultimacy is qualified. She herself had told Sinclair earlier: "'. . . there is no dream that lasts forever, each dream is followed by another, and one should not cling to any particular one'" (page 120). She herself is a high point on the road, a goal. To what further promised land she may lead is not specified. The time of happiness and fulfillment in her presence had been just that "life's first fulfillment" (page 134). "What was to follow? I would battle through again, suffer the old longings, dream dreams, be alone" (page 134). There seems a suggestion here of what will reappear in Siddhartha, Steppenwolf and Magister Ludi: a realization that any one stage of fulfillment is provisional, transitory, destined to be transcended by further fulfillments; there is no one resting point.

Summary

What has preceded has attempted to delineate the very individual contribution of Demian to Hesse's understanding of the self and its realization. It is the first of the ten novels being considered here to treat the subject in such depth and complexity. Elements in the four earlier novels presaged what is here but only dimly. There is more continuity between Demian and the two novels immediately following, Siddhartha and Steppenwolf. Much of what is said initially in Demian is elaborated still further in these two subsequent works. With minimal reference to the texts of Demian--nearly every significant one has been quoted--a short summary of what it says will be assayed here.

Gemüt and Schicksal: The individual's fate (destiny, "ordained" goal as a person) is writ large in his natural disposition or temperament. It seems likely that this is most understandable against a background of an opposite kind of teaching such as may have been part of Hesse's Pietist heritage. This latter teaching would suppose that one's natural disposition and temperament were infected with evil so that perfection or holiness would require the suppression or severe disciplining of elements of one's natural bent. The will itself would be understood as inevitably tending to an excessive self-aggrandizement and hence in need of denial. The Nietzschean teaching of Demian holds that the individual's disposition, nature, is unique and meant to be cooperated with in achieving an unfolding or blossoming of its potential. This is his fate, not in the

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determinist sense of something he cannot struggle against, but rather in the sense of something he should seek to know well and surrender to completely. Those who resist it or fail to get to know it become, rather, do not become, but remain inadequate, partially realized beings, basically not totally human.

The Tasks Imposed by Fate: A host of tasks follow from this willingness to follow fate, tasks not entirely distinguishable from each other but discrete enough to be enumerated as follows: 1) The initial demand is that one come to truly know himself, become aware of all that lives in and lurks within without fear and without any intention of judging or censuring what he finds. 2) The person must be willing to attempt to become his true self, no matter what surprising demands this may make and how much it may alienate him from his environment. Indeed one must forcefully will one's fate. 3) The herd, the unawakened masses must be left behind as he forges his own rule or life, his own laws of conduct, his own morals. Only he can know what is required of and what is forbidden to himself. 4) Inevitably the end result will be some kind of isolation, some loneness, which is cold, demanding, difficult for most men to accept. Jesus and Nietzsche are examples of unwavering acceptance of this isolation. 5) The whole task is one of becoming human: and humanity (human-ness) is not something given, to be preserved; it is something ahead, beckoning one on. 6) Basically one cannot expect help from outside one's self; everything lies within, waiting only to tapped, to be found and utilized. Others, possibly, may serve as occasions for self-understanding but cannot substitute for the individual's plunge into his own depths.

7) One must not only know and accept what is within one's self but affirm it confidently with no apology. Fear and hesitancy must be banished.

The Task is Unending: No man ever succeeds in becoming totally himself, truly, fully human. The dynamism of the task is such that each single realized goal is more of a lure to a new one than an invitation to settle down and be contented--again an echo of Romantic Irony. So infinite are the possibilities and potential of the personality that there is no exhausting them in one lifetime. All men are experiments of Nature and must be willing to experiment with different modes of living and acting. Most indispensable is the willingness to die and be reborn again and again in the course of one lifetime, to leave one level of life, no matter how satisfying, for a richer level, a new kind of life. In leaving childhood for adulthood most men do this to some extent at least but that is only one and a very basic kind of break or severance one must be willing to face. Demian's superman must break with tradition, family, bourgeois society, everything past, common standards and behavior, must refuse finality to any one achieved level of existence. No dream is definitive. It means a readiness to learn from every source for there is nothing that happens, no one we meet, merely by chance. All is fated. The sparrow-hawk in the heraldic emblem over the Sinclair home is breaking out of a shell, symbolic of the necessity for the true self to be willing to be reborn again and again and to learn to fly while others only trudge.

Everything is Sacred: The shadowy and esoteric figure of Abraxas has flitted in and out of these pages occasionally. Historically it was also spelt Abrasax. Harnack believed that the name belonged to no known speech. It is found carved on some gems from the early centuries of the Christian era and included in lists of mystical words. It seems to be associated with a Gnostic named Basilides, applied in his system to "the 'Great Archon', the princeps, of the 365 spheres" that figure in that system.[15] Jung ascribed his book VII Sermones ad Mortuos to Basilides and Abraxas appears therein.[16] In any case Demian, a professor Follens and Pistorius all at one time or another refer to Abraxas in Demian. Like the image Sinclair painted and dreamed of, Abraxas includes all opposites, especially male and female qualities, good and evil (in the ordinary definition); he blesses and approves of all that is in man. Jehovah, on the contrary, according to Demian, is linked solely with the realm of light and goodness. Such a limitation is criticized because it excludes certain things, such as sex, as evil or to be restricted and hemmed in by laws. Abraxas affirms everything, much in the manner of some similar conceptions in Hindu thought. Like Mutter Eva, he symbolizes the reconciliation of all opposites, their union or identity. Several times it is explained that this is not meant as an invitation to an orgy of antinomianism but, in the end, it is up to the individual to decide what he must or must not do. This again, could easily be an understandable reaction to a too-universal moralism such as in fact has dominated Western Christianity, especially modern Protestantism. Along with other images in Demian Abraxas symbolizes well Sinclair's ideal of some ultimate union of all opposites, some transcending of the divisions and disparities of life as usually encountered. This is a persistent Hessean preoccupation.

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[15] The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1911), ix, pp. 16, 17.

[16] Serrano, p. 94.

Union and Communion: Closely related to the foregoing is the ideal of unity and oneness with all of nature. This, as well as a deep union with and true community with men, is symbolized well in the universal mother, Frau Eva. Likely enough the feminine is chosen to represent this because of the often-averred psychological point that the female is more naturally and easily attuned to nature than the male. Complementing the Nietzschean teaching which often calls for rupture is this image of the mother emblematic of unity, peace, communion, love and warmth. The true self educated along Demian's teaching, needs to supplement all that with a deep and elemental oneness with all of nature and all mankind. This final note in Demian signalizes some awareness on Hesse's part of the total individualism of the ideal otherwise presented and this last note will find more place in subsequent novels.

II. Siddhartha

Summary

The scene is India, the sixth century BC. Siddhartha, the son of a Brahmin, destined for a like life, disconcerts his father by telling him that he would like to become a wandering ascetic, a Samana. He does this and his friend Govinda goes with him. They follow the way of the ascetics scrupulously and unremittingly, but eventually Siddhartha decides that the ascetics have no more to teach him and that what they have taught him is of limited value. He leaves and Govinda accompanies him, drawn by the prospect of seeing and hearing the great Gotama, the Buddha, about whom they have been hearing so much.

Govinda, after hearing the Buddha, joins Buddha's followers. Siddhartha does not; he tells the Buddha that he must find his own way, that he cannot accept anyone else's teaching, no matter how fine.

In his travels he comes to reject the notion that the world is illusion and decides instead to take it in itself as meaningful. His travels end for a while when he comes on the cortege of the beautiful courtesan Kamala. Shedding all signs of Samanahood, he becomes her lover. He goes into business with a rich merchant, Kamaswami, and becomes affluent, sensual, even a gambler. All this finally disillusions him and he leaves Kamala and the life he has been leading.

He thinks of suicide but is saved by murmuring the mantra Om. He meets an old ferryman, Vasudeva, whom he had met years before. Impressed by Vasudeva's serenity he comes to live and work with him. Kamala passes their way on a pilgrimage to the Buddha. With her is the son begotten by Siddhartha before he left her. While stopping at the ferry she is bitten by a snake and dies leaving the boy with Siddhartha. The boy is spoiled and also, rather naturally, not too happy about living with two elderly contemplatives in the woods. He leaves and Siddhartha tries to follow to bring him back. He has become completely bound up with love for his son, blind, unrequited love. His pursuit is in vain and he resigns himself to his son's finding his own way too.

Returning to Vasudeva he learns from him and the river some acceptance of life as it is, some sense of unity with it. Vasudeva dies shortly after. As the book ends Govinda is once more passing this way and, impressed by Siddhartha's contentment, asks him what the secret is. Siddhartha tells him that probably he, Govinda, has been seeking too much, too constantly; he should do less seeking and more accepting. The final word seems to be that Siddhartha has found the object of his questing less in pursuing it than in allowing himself to be taught by the river, by nature, by the life of Vasudeva, a man of harmony and peace.

Siddhartha among the Hessean Novels

The remote setting in time and place of Siddhartha, its classic simplicity, the rhythm of its language echoing a temple service, all insinuate a break with Demian and what went before.[17] Sinclair's anguished seeking to know himself seems far from the cool serenity of Siddhartha's style and conclusion. Colin Wilson says it "has a delusive air of having solved great problems."[18] All this has elements of truth, and yet. . . . . . .

Siddhartha is not, it is true, literally a twentieth century European seeking some firm ground within himself or elsewhere; but he is, in Oriental guise, still Hesse pursuing Selbsterziehung (Ball, page 79). ". . . Hesse's new hero is still a Western, Faustian spirit eagerly seeking the meaning of life. . . . " (Mileck, page 78). Stylistically Siddhartha is certainly in discontinuity with Demian and Steppenwolf but the questions they probe are basically the same though Siddhartha gives the impression of a calmer, more ultimate solution than does Demian. What the solution, if such it be, is will become apparent. In any case, as Steppenwolf was to confirm so well a few years later, it was not enough to put at rest the cor inquietum of Hermann Hesse.

Siddhartha was written at Casa Camuzzi near Montagnola and the first part was ready in 1919; the whole was published in 1922. The eremitical setting of Hesse's life at Casa Camuzzi was appropriate to such a contemplative work. Isolated as he was at the time and as the book is by style from his other works, there is still a continuity in the quest. Too in its framework of Oriental thought it reaches back to Hesse's youth. Earlier note was taken of the persistent presence of Eastern religious thought in Hesse's life, dating to his parents' and grandparents' associations with India and his own studies in Eastern religion and philosophy.

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[17] Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha, trans. Hilda Rosner (New York: New Directions Paperback, 1957), p. 15. References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 15). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume iii. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, iii, page __).

[18] Colin Wilson, The Outsider (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 55.

Worth remarking, once again, is the eclectic character of Hesse's use of Eastern thought. Hesse was not about to accept Hinduism or Buddhism in toto any more than he did Pietism; nor would be reject entirely any such evidence of man's concern with ultimate problems anymore than he ever entirely rejected Christianity. Siddhartha well illustrates all of this. Consequently it is understandable that "many orthodox Hindus consider the book to be a false re-working of Oriental truth from a Christian point of view."[19] The word "false," of course, implies the expectation of a complete acceptance of some Eastern system and that is a false expectation. Otherwise the "complaint" is quite perceptive. In Siddhartha there is an acceptance of some elements of Brahminism (the Hinduism of the Vedas including the Upanishads) and the rejection of others; similarly for distinctively Buddhist elements. It will become evident that some Taoist elements have more final say and that the whole story retains distinctively Christian overtones, and, possibly, some Nietzschean echoes.

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[19] Serrano, p. 23.

Style

The unique serenity that shines out of Siddhartha especially when compared with the two novels which precede and follow it owes much to its hieratic, unhurried, repetitive style. These qualities and the constant use of parallelisms are, Ball tells us (page 175), meant to recreate the rhythm of Indian music. Hesse's grandfather had edited a collection of Indian songs and they were known in the Hesse household. (Ball, pages 168-169). The Western reader can find something similar in style in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament or in the New Testament in St. John's Gospel:

> In the beginning was the Word,
> and the Word was with God,
> and the Word was God.
> He was in the beginning with God;
> all things were made through him,
> and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3.

One example of this in the German of Siddhartha will suffice:

> Wandelnd auf den rosigen Wegen des Feigengartens,
> sitzend im bläulichen Schatten des Hains der Betrachtung,
> waschend seine Glieder im täglichen Sühnebad,
> opfernd im tiefschattigen Mangowald,
>   von vollkommenem Anstand der Gebärden,
>   von allen geliebt, aller Freude,
>   trug er doch deine Freude im Herzen.
> Träume kamen ihm and rastlose Gedanken
>   aus dem Wasser des Flusses geflossen,
>   aus den Sternen der Nacht gefunkelt,
>   aus den Strahlen der Sonne geschmolzen,
> Träume kamen ihm und Ruhelosigkeit der Seele,
>   aus den Opfern geraucht,
>   aus den Versen der Rig-Veda gehaucht,
>   aus den Lehren der alten Brahmanen geträufelt. (GS, iii, 618-619)

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The English of Hilda Rosner often succeeds well in conveying the same feeling:

> Wandering along the rosy paths of the fig garden,
> sitting in contemplation in the bluish shade of the grove,
> washing his limbs in the daily bath of atonement,
> offering sacrifices in the depths of the shady mango wood
> with complete grace of manner,
> beloved by all, a joy to all,
> there was yet no joy in his own heart.
>
> Dreams and restless thoughts came flowing to him
> from the river,
> from the twinkling stars at night,
> from the sun's melting rays.
> Dreams and a restlessness of the soul came to him,
> arising from the smoke of the sacrifices,
> emanating from the verses of the Rig-Veda,
> trickling through from the teachings of the old Brahmins.
> (page 5)

This leisurely regularity in style reinforces the reader's impression of a confident and finally achieved synthesis or solution of the problem of life.

Hesse's Siddhartha and the Buddha

The name given to the hero of this "Indian Story" (the subtitle in the German of this novel) is Siddhartha which was also the given name of the Buddha. Before his enlightenment (Buddha-hood) he was Siddhartha Gotama, the son of a "prince" in what is now the southern edge of Nepal. The Buddha appears in Siddhartha and Siddhartha himself is evidently a double for him, an alternative to the historical Buddha, and does have some traits and experiences like those of the Buddha.

According to legend Gotama was shielded by his father from evil and suffering and lived in comparative luxury. He was married and

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had a son Rahula. But finally the inevitable sight of old age, sickness and death plus the sight of some wandering ascetics affect him so deeply that he left family and home and took up the life of an ascetic. That he lived this seriously the "skin-and-bones" images of him at this period clearly asseverate. Ultimately he found this unsatisfying, not the solution to the problem of suffering, an extreme, in fact, as wrong in its own way as was the life of luxury he lived before. Meditation under a tree for about a month and a half leads to his enlightenment, his insight into life and his guarantee that he would have no more rebirths. This period of meditation resulted in his teaching on how to still the craving and desire which is the basic source of suffering and rebirth. To this teaching is given the name of the "Middle Way," that is, a mean between a life of passion and luxury on the one hand and the self-torturing life of the ascetics on the other. This is summarized in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path. The Buddha encountered in Siddhartha is quite consistent with most of this.

Siddhartha's life is parallel to that of the Buddha. He is depicted as the son of a Brahmin, a dignified and respected caste, destined to follow in his father's footsteps, a priest like him. Very soon though, Siddhartha feels he has outgrown Brahminism and decides to take up the life of an ascetic, a Samana. Unlike the Buddha Siddhartha's life of luxury, passion, sensual satisfaction, follows on the life of the ascetic and his "middle way" or final teaching or understanding follows on this.

Siddhartha's ideological or religious history should be recounted

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here as it is parallel to the story summarized at the beginning of the chapter but quite a bit more of an interior matter than could be suggested there. This will be attended to here and in doing so Hesse's indebtedness to Oriental and other sources will be pointed out. What this all means in terms of Hesse's quest for the self or, less definitively, his quest for understanding of the self is, of course, the prime consideration. The different phases of Siddhartha's spiritual life are not totally discrete; while some elements of an earlier phase will be rejected, others will be kept and reappear.

Brahminism and Vedanta

The religion of Siddhartha's home is a compound of what can be called Brahminism because of its emphasis on the duties and place of (Brahmins) and sacrifice or Vedism (from the Vedas, scriptures) and Vedanta (literally, the last or end of the Vedas, the Upanishads). The hopes of his Brahmin father are imperiled as Siddhartha questions the value of ablutions, sacrifice, the gods, the speculation of the Brahmins. All this appears to Siddhartha far removed from and of little help to experiencing Atman's (the Self's) unity with Brahman (the All). Hardly are the tenets and practices of Vedism mentioned than they are demurred at in the name of the works that immediately followed them historically in the Indian canon, the Upanishads.[20] The more philosophical concern of these latter writings for the underlying reality beneath the gods and all else is close to Siddhartha's heart.

[20] For all of this, See R. C. Zaehner, Hinduism (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

"To press towards the Self, towards Atman--was there another way that was worth seeking" (page 6)? To know that one's inmost self, Atman, was united with or identical with Brahman, this was peace and deliverance. The Brahmins were the custodians of this teaching but do any of them really live it, Siddhartha asks. With this in mind he and his friend and admirer Govinda practice meditation especially on the sacred name Om. Meditating on Om is the force that helps propel Atman to Brahman. Siddhartha quotes the Mundaka Upanishad (2.2.4):

> Om is the bow, the arrow is the soul,
> Brahman is the arrow's goal
> At which one aims unflinchingly. (page 9)

Enter the Samanas

In a technique familiar from Demian the appearance on the scene of each new persona serves to open a new route to our hero. Three wandering ascetics, Samanas, pass through the town: ". . . solitary, strange and hostile--lean jackals in the world of men. Around them hovered an atmosphere of still passion, of devastating service, of unpitying self-denial" (page 9). Siddhartha determines on following them and Govinda reads in his face the incipient unfolding of Siddhartha's destiny (Schicksal). Siddhartha wears down his father's expected opposition by his persevering and strong will. As he leaves the town at dawn to follow the way of the ascetics Govinda joins him. Soon they share the abstinence of the ascetics, their contempt for ordinary life, its passions and ambitions; they seek to deny, extirpate, all sense of Self "to experience pure thought" (page 15), to reach that stratum of being beneath the Self. They practice Yoga.

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Though they learn many ways of losing Self, yet in the end they always return to it or it returns to them. Siddhartha shocks the more docile and less questing Govinda by saying they could have learned all this as easily in a prostitute's room or in an inn (page 18). All the exercises of the Samanas are only a "temporary palliative against the pain and folly of life" (page 18). Any drinker finds the same temporary release from the pain of life that they, the Samanas, gain through the hard path of asceticism. Siddhartha feels no closer to his goal of realizing Atman. Again, providentially, he and Govinda are assisted in leaving the Samanas by tales of a man named Gotama who had conquered the cycles of rebirth, something the eldest of the Samanas, at sixty, was still seeking. Once more using his will to gain the Samanas consent, Siddhartha leaves one stage of life for another accompanied again by Govinda. The way of the Brahmins has been rejected; the life and way of the Samanas is also rejected much as it was by the historical Buddha.

The Buddha

"Ah, then we have reached our goal and our journey is at an end," rejoices Govinda when the pilgrims have found they are in the vicinity of the Buddha. As he already suspects, it will not be the end of the journey for Siddhartha, even though he sees in the Buddha what he himself is seeking:

> . . . every finger of his hand spoke of peace, spoke of completeness, sought nothing, imitated nothing, reflected a continual quiet, an unfading light, an invulnerable peace. . . .
>
> . . . there was no seeking, no will, no counterfeit, no effort--only light and peace (page 30).

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One easily discerns in the depiction of the ideal qualities subsumed today under the name of authenticity: no imitation or counterfeiting, only sure harmony with self and reality.

The pilgrims hear the Buddha speak and Govinda steps forward to become a disciple. Siddhartha's objections to following the Buddha himself, made to both Govinda and the Buddha, seem to be a compound of intellectual difficulties and his by now firm intention of finding his own way. The intellectual objection seems to find little if any echo later in the book and amounts to a complaint that the Buddha's linking together of all the world's phenomena by the chain of cause and effect is inconsistently broken when he lets something new, something that was not there before and that cannot be demonstrated and proved, "that is your doctrine of rising above the world, of salvation" (page 35), break in. It is comparable to the Greek intellectual objection in New Testament times to the Incarnation. Consistent with the picture history and legend present, the Buddha objects to this intellectualizing about his preaching, warns Siddhartha that opinions mean nothing. The Buddha teaches a way of salvation, not of knowledge. Siddhartha responds--and this would not be alien to the Buddha's teaching either--that he must "leave all doctrines and all teachers" and reach his goal alone (page 37). He rejects the Buddha's teaching and way for himself, not in itself, and he makes this clear by saying he does not judge others who follow it (page 37). The Buddha's concluding words warn Siddhartha against being "too clever" (page 38). Possibly this warning, the rebuke about his intellectualism and Siddhartha's own determination to find his own way constitute the alchemy from which comes Siddhartha's new and revised understanding of things.

The next chapter is entitled Erwachen (Awakening). It provides a transition describing the change in Siddhartha's thought from the life of a religious seeker to that of one immersed, for good or ill, in the world of the senses. His musings while on his way away from Buddha and Govinda reflect much of the nature of Hesse's whole quest, the concern here, and also, one may suspect, Hesse's state as a self-taught man--his formal education ended on the secondary level; he was a drop-out:

> What is it that you wanted to learn from teachings and teachers, and although they taught you much, what was it they could not teach you? And he thought: It was the Self, the character and nature of which I wished to learn. I wanted to rid myself of the Self, to conquer it, but I could not conquer it, I could only deceive it, could only fly from it, could only hide from it. Truly nothing in the world has occupied my thought as much as the Self, this riddle, that I live, that I am one and am separated and different from everybody else, that I am Siddhartha; and about nothing in the world do I know less than about myself, about Siddhartha.(page 40).

He makes about himself the complaint that Sinclair made about Pistorius: that he seeks to fulfill some particular ideal or some particular vocation, yet is not being faithful enough to himself. He does not know himself sufficiently or is using these other, more external roles as an escape from this paramount task.

> In seeking Brahman, Atman, I wished to destroy myself, to get away from myself, in order to find in the unknown innermost, the nucleus of all things, Atman, Life, the Divine, the Absolute. But by doing so, I lost myself on the way (page 41).

His decision is, finally, to learn from and by himself, through his experience of himself and now, for the first time, from the experience of the world around him, the world of the senses. He rejects the notion of Maya, that all is illusion: "Meaning and reality were not hidden somewhere behind things, they were in them, in all of them" (page 42). This rejection of teachers, of conventional ideals (in this case of Indian society) of goals dictated by society or religion again sounds, like pages of Demian, quite Nietzschean and others have noted this. Like the superman hero of Demian he feels also the "icy chill" of his isolation "alone like a star in the heavens" (pages 43, 44). He has left Brahmins, Samanas and now the Buddha. So far it amounts to a tasting of some of the main streams of Indian thought and the subsequent and partial rejection of their content.

But like the Buddha Siddhartha is to have his own awakening, enlightenment. Its germ lies in what is referred to above as his decision to reject all the teachers of Indian thought and to trust in his own experience, including that of the senses; to be present to reality, to taste it in its immediacy. He feels like "one awakened" or "newly born" (page 42). Leaving behind Govinda and the Buddha he sets out learning something new wherever he goes in the now transformed world (page 47). "All this had always been and he had never seen it; he was never present. Now he was present and belonged to it"(page 49). Much of this new spirit seems related to Taoist and Zen thought (and they have historical relations,[21] especially the emphasis on being present, on directness in one's attitude toward reality. If this reflects Zen influence in Hesse this is further indication of a progress through Indian and Oriental thought in an almost strictly chronological order--Brahminism to Vedanta to original Buddhism to Zen, a Chinese-Japanese development of Buddhism. In this directness and acceptance of the world around him and of both intellectual and sensual experience lies a premonition of what becomes Siddhartha's final stance. It is well stated at this stage in his musings:

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[21] See Alan Watts, The Way of Zen (New York: Random House, 1957).

> Both thought and the senses were fine things, behind both of them lay hidden the last meaning; it was worth while listening to them both, to play with both, neither to despise nor overrate either of them, but to listen intently to both voices (page 50).

> Beide, die Gedanken wie die Sinne, waren hübsche Dinge, hinter beiden lag der letzte Sinn verborgen, beide galt es zu hören, mit beiden zu spielen, beide weder zu verachten noch zu überschätzen, aus beiden die geheimen Stimmen des Innersten zu erlauschen (GS, iii, page 652).

Finally in a dream--a most consistent device of Hesse's for opening the deepest thought of his protagonists to the reader--Siddhartha embraces Govinda, somewhat disconsolate at being abandoned by Siddhartha. Govinda in his arms becomes a woman from whose breast he drinks. The Urmutter again? The Earth Mother? The drink seems to embody again the unity and goodness of everything:

> It tasted of woman and man, of sun and forest, of animal and flower, of every fruit, of every pleasure. It was intoxicating (pages 50, 51).

Kamala and Sansara

Siddhartha next is ferried across a river, a symbol of a transition from this experience of a preliminary enlightenment to the world of Kamala and Sansara (page 51) (see page 14). Soon he will embrace passionately the world of senses in the form of Kamala and drink deeply from her breasts.

He sees this embodiment of sensual beauty ("very sweet, very clever, beautiful" (page 54)) being borne on a sedan chair, and learns quickly that she is Kamala, a thriving courtesan. Once having seen and tasted briefly her mouth he learns that further lessons about love, the pleasures of love, will require his transformation into a man of the world: well-oiled hair, shoes, clothes, money (page 57). Kamala introduces him to a rich merchant, Kamaswami, who takes him in for his ability to read and write. Siddhartha's partnership with Kamaswami provides the money for his course from Kamala in _Kama Sutra_-like techniques (page 68). _Kama_ is the word for desire or pleasure. The lengthy course of lessons in the art of love absorbs the novice Siddhartha. As is the case in regard to Goldmund's long series of erotic adventures in _Narcissus and Goldmund_ all this is taken for granted and the object of no moral judgment though later seen as a necessary prelude to a sort of conversion.

While their relationship assuredly opens a whole new world of sense delight to Siddhartha, it is a love-relationship only in a limited way. Both are ardent about it but neither evinces any intention of establishing a lifelong union; both, in fact, doubt whether they are capable of love except in the purely erotic sense. The distinction of "true love" and "erotic love" is not fashionable at present and probably unintelligible to some but it is implicit in this work of Hesse's. Erotic love is a game for them; another kind of love would be somehow more, a deep bond:

> . . . they played the game of love, one of the thirty or forty different games which Kamala knew. Her body was as supple as a jaguar and a hunter's bow; whoever learned about love from her, learned many pleasures, many secrets. She played with Siddhartha for a long time, repulsed him, overwhelmed him, conquered him, rejoiced at her mastery, until he was overcome and lay exhausted at her side.
>
> 'You are the best lover that I have had,' she said thoughtfully. . . . 'And yet, my dear, you have remained a Samana. You do not really love me--you love nobody. Is that not true?'
> 'Maybe,' said Siddhartha wearily. 'I am like you. You cannot love either, otherwise how could you practice love as an art? Perhaps people like us cannot love. Ordinary people (the Kindermenschen of the chapter title) can--that is their secret' (page 75).

Why the inability to love? Are Kamala and Siddhartha both too wrapped up in themselves and their own pleasure to totally give themselves to each other? Kamala will later evince an interest in the Buddha; are the two of them obsessed with an ascetic or religious ideal which prevents them from totally giving themselves to each other and to love? Or is this some romantic attitude which says--always--"No, this is not it," "Nor this"--which prides itself on eternally unsatisfied yearning?

Concurrently with Siddhartha's immersion in sexual love goes his successful involvement in business with Kamaswami. This entails a diffident and dutiful discharge of his work and ultimately leads to a passionate enjoyment of the excitement of gambling. All this: his learning of sensual pleasure from Kamala and his absorption in the world of business and ordinary human concerns is fittingly described under the chapter title of Sansara. More on that in a moment; first note must be taken of two echoes from Siddhartha's earlier life. Two elements from the past tend to restrain Siddhartha's enmeshment in Sansara, in business and love; they are: 1) a Samana-like pride and contempt, a haughty condescension toward the interests and concerns of ordinary people (page 72) 2) the gradually silenced voice within which complains against this kind of life (page 73). Eventually:

> He only noticed that the bright and clear inward voice, that had once awakened in him and had always guided him in his finest hours, had become silent.
>
> The world had caught him; pleasure, covetousness, idleness, and finally also that vice that he had always despised and scorned as the most foolish--acquisitiveness (page 80).

Siddhartha holds out much longer against the lure of business and acquisitiveness than he does against the charms of Kamala; there is never any contest in this latter. But, as regards his involvement in business, he at first keeps himself aloof, does his work well, but with no great heart or zeal, detached. Slowly, though, he succumbs: the voice within is silenced; his mockery of ordinary men gives way to more participation in their concerns; he gambles for excitement. The light of his earlier awakening is dissipated.

> Slowly, like moisture entering the dying tree trunk, slowly filling and rotting it, so did the world and inertia creep into Siddhartha's soul; it slowly filled his soul, made it heavy, made it tired, sent it to sleep. But on the other hand his senses became more awakened, they learned a great deal, experienced a great deal (pages 77, 78).

He loses the gains of his earlier religious seeking and, while he learns a great deal about the world of sense, he still cannot enter it totally:

> Gradually, along with his growing riches, Siddhartha himself acquired some of the characteristics of the ordinary people, some of their childishness and some of their anxiety. And yet he envied them; the more he became like them, the more he envied them. He envied them the one thing that he lacked and

> that they had: the sense of importance with which they lived their lives, the depth of their pleasures and sorrows, the anxious but sweet happiness of their continual power to love (pages 78, 79).

He only learned the unpleasant things from them; he learned the discontent, the idleness, the bad habits and lovelessness of the rich (page 79).

This whole world of the Kamaswami people (page 85) is a game, Siddhartha feels; and even Kamala--was she or was she not dear to him? probably not any longer--is part of the game. "The game was called Sansara, a game for children, a game which was perhaps enjoyable played once, twice, ten times--but was it worth playing continually" (page 85)? This detailing above of Siddhartha's spiritual decline, of the objects and endeavors that now hold sway in him--all this is Sansara (or Samsara). The whole world of events and persons bound by the laws of cause and effect, conditioned by space and time, the whole of phenomenal existence, this is Sansara. "The endless prolongation of life" because of the unsatisfied results of Karma--all this is more strictly speaking Sansara."[22] Here, once again, in regarding immersion in this as regrettable and a backsliding, Siddhartha in echoing a major concern of much of Hinduism and a doctrine basic to Buddhism's quest for Nirvana. Later in Siddhartha this regret over entanglement in Sansara is equated with a Christian variety of despar.

Siddhartha's realization that his path--on which he has met Kamala and Sansara--is no longer good for him expresses itself in talk to Kamala about the Buddha and momentarily arouses an interest on her part in the Buddha.

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[22] Zaehner, Hinduism, pp. 5-8 and 80-85.

> But then she entices him, and in love play she clasped him to her with extreme fervor, fiercely and tearfully, as if she wanted once more to extract the last sweet drop from this fleeting pleasure. Never had it been so strangely clear to Siddhartha how closely related passion was to death (page 82).

This last note--the close relation of passion and death--will become more pronounced in Narcissus and Goldmund.

Siddhartha's "Baptism" (Am Flusse)

Hesse seems determined that Siddhartha's odyssey include, besides a voyage through Eastern thought, also the Christian experience. The chapter "By the River" which now follows could be prefaced aptly and understandably by a few lines of Jesus's words to Nicodemus in John 3:5-8:

> Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born anew.' The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit.'

If a sort of intellectual economy is practiced, it is not necessary, though allowable, to look to Indian or Chinese thought for the source of Hesse's description of Siddhartha's transition from Sansara to "salvation." The framework and vocabulary are understood easily as Christian, even more specifically Lutheran (and, therefore inclusive of Pietism).[23] This is not to deny that there is some mingling of traditions in Siddhartha's attempt to fashion a modus vivendi. Ultimately the Chinese Taoist tradition seems to be the victor though this will not be unequivocally so. In this chapter too while Christian imagery and a Lutheran kind of experience of despair and grace, of conversion, are to the fore, elements of Hinduism and Buddhism persist. So when Govinda (encountered once again by Siddhartha in his wandering) says to the richly-clad Siddhartha: "And what are you now, Siddhartha?" and Siddhartha replies: "I do not know" (page 95), the latter is expressing not only a momentary state of indefiniteness but somewhat the indefiniteness of the whole "solution" offered by or achieved by Siddhartha.

With Kamala, Kamaswami and the Kindermenschen all behind him, Siddhartha wanders into the forest in true Hindu style. He has hit the bottom of Sansara, the nadir of this just past "filthy" life as he terms it (page 89). He is bitter, suffocating from ennui, filled with self-hatred (page 88)--"He saw his face (in the water) and spat at it" (page 90)--he is in despair (Zerweiflung)(page 91). He desires oblivion, death by drowning (page 90). From the remote reaches of his soul, now at the end of its tether, comes the remembered syllable Om ("The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes. . .", John 3:8) pulling him back from the contemplated folly of suicide (page 90). While Om is still the name of perfection, God, a way of immersion in the Nameless (page 92), its sudden presence, its saving function in his life, the change and renewal it occasions (page 12), all strongly suggest grace. And a further text justifies this reading:

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[23] In the essay, "Ein Stückchen Theologie," Hesse expresses the conviction that the basic spiritual experience of mankind falls into steps discernible in all religions. Nevertheless, here the vocabulary and the experience described are significantly Christian and put Indian and Chinese terms in second place for this interlude, at least.

> I had to experience despair, I had to sink to the greatest mental depths, to thoughts of suicide, in order to experience grace, to hear Om again. . . . (page 98).

Linked, though somewhat transiently, with this renewal is love:

> . . . permeated with Om, how could he help but love someone and something. That was just the magic that had happened to him during his sleep and the Om in him--he loved everything, he was full of joyous love towards everything that he saw. And it seemed to him that was just why he was previously so ill--because he could love nothing and nobody (page 96).

Previously Siddhartha and Kamala had touched on this issue and once again it appear here curiously isolated and undeveloped until a later chapter.

Siddhartha reflects on his past from Brahmin's son to Kamala's lover:

> It is a good thing to experience everything oneself, he thought. As a child I learned that pleasures of the world and riches were not good. I have known it for a long time, but I have only just experienced it. Now I know it not only with my intellect, but with my eyes, with my heart, with my stomach. It is a good that I know this (page 100).

Here once again is Hesse's frequently stated conviction of the irreplaceability of one's own experience, the necessity of confirming for oneself whatever traditional wisdom may already have told one. More specifically the description of Siddhartha's conversion here may hark back to Pietists' favoring of experience over theology and Lutheran trust in the renewing effects of a despair of all human activity or, better, of the readiness for grace, the openness of a despairing soul to God's activity. He has to learn through experience and to the point of despair the vanity of sacrifice and ritual, of asceticism, of teachers and of the life of a libertine. Now, certain that he knows nothing, that he is a fool again, an ordinary person, above all a child, he feels remade, a new man (pages 92, 97, 98). The whole is distinctly Lutheran and redolent of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and of St. John. In *Romans* the believer is renewed by such a realization as described above and by letting the old man be drowned in the waters of Baptism with the dying Christ in order to rise with him from the same waters, a new man. He must die to self in order to live for God. Or in Johannine terms, he becomes again a little child, is born anew. Here is the Hessean-*Siddhartha* parallel, with my italics:

> Perhaps he had really died, perhaps he had been *drowned* and was *reborn* in another form (page 92).
>
> Nothing is mine, I know nothing, I possess nothing. I have learned nothing. How strange it is! Now, when I am no longer young, when my hair is fast growing grey, when strength begins to diminish, now I am *beginning again like a child* (page 97).
>
> I have had to experience so much stupidity, so many vices, so much error, so much nausea, disillusionment and sorrow, just in order to *become a child again* and begin anew. But it was right that it should be so; my eyes and heart acclaim it. I had to experience *despair*, I had to sink to the greatest mental depths, to thoughts of suicide, in order to *experience grace*, to hear Om again, to sleep deeply again and to awaken refreshed again. I had to become a fool again in order to find Atman in myself. I had to sin in order to live again (page 98, 99).
>
> Was it not this Self, his small, fearful and proud Self, with which he had wrestled for so many years, but which had always conquered him again, which appeared each time again and again, which robbed him of happiness and filled him with fear? Was it not this which had finally died today

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> in the woods by this delightful river? Was it not because of its death that he was *now like a child*, so full of trust and happiness, without fear (page 101)?
>
> Too much knowledge had hindered him; too many holy verses, too many sacrificial rites, too much mortification of the flesh, too much doing and striving. He had been full of arrogance; he had always been the cleverest, the most eager--always a step ahead of the others, always the learned and intellectual one, always the priest or the sage. His Self had crawled into this priesthood, into this arrogance, into this intellectuality. It sat there tightly and grew, while he thought he was destroying it by fasting and penitence. . . . He had *died* and a *new Siddhartha* had awakened from his sleep (page 101, 102).

The river has long been in Christian iconography and tradition a symbol of the renewing water of Baptism. For Hesse and Siddhartha it may symbolize the womb and the mother, two elements not entirely missing either from Christian use of water, the river, the baptismal font.

> Siddhartha had wanted to drown himself in this river; the old, tired, despairing Siddhartha was today drowned in it. The new Siddhartha felt a deep love for this flowing water and decided that he would not leave it again so quickly (page 102).
>
> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

Trials and Tao

The loftly, liturgy-like language of the Siddhartha legend easily lulls the reader into a sense of complete agreement and satisfaction. And Hesse himself spoke of it as expressing best his concept of the self and of the world.[24] In reality, on analysis, it is a fairly complex

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[24] Hans Beerman, "Hermann Hesse and the Bhagavad-Gita," *The Midwest Quarterly*, i (October 1959), p. 28.

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and not simply limpid interweaving of themes culled from the world's religion. In this final section of the book (the last four chapters) this becomes expecially evident. Siddhartha is the sort of work that Hesse could have reworked for years in the hope of achieving a satisfactory synthesis. The serenity and peace that the reader and the protagonist seem assured of at one particular moment is often qualified a few pages on, reminding us that no simple formula has been or is being provided for the self's or the person's inner peace and fulfillment.

The previous chapter, of such Christian resonance, introduced the theme of love or, better, picked it up again after its brief mention by Kamala and Siddhartha earlier. Beginning with the first of these four final chapters, "The Ferryman," another theme comes into prominence. The effort in this analysis to achieve some simplicity and clarity is probably more the reason for saying theme than the book itself; for there are conceivably a number of themes but all clustered around the river and Vasudeva, the ferryman, themes that persist through the last chapters. For clarity, however, space will be given primarily to two themes: 1) love and 2) the river-Vasudeva theme. In a sense they are competing themes since love, for instance, is spoken of at one time as the most important thing and yet, over all, the other theme receives greater emphasis. They are not totally disparate, however, and possibly their unity was more apparent to Hesse than to the reader.

1) Love. In a letter Hesse stressed the importance of love in

Siddhartha.[25] It receives its chief development in terms of Siddhartha's son of the same name who is left with the two men when his mother dies at the ferry of snake-bite. Kamala dies convinced that the Siddhartha whom she has now seen for the first time in years is at peace. But she leaves with him the boy who, Siddhartha soon discovers, is sulky, spoilt and disinclined to work with the two older man.

> Siddhartha began to realize that no happiness and peace had come to him with his son, only sorrow and trouble. But he loved him and preferred the sorrow and trouble of his love rather than happiness and pleasure without the boy (page 120).

The love that struck Siddhartha as so joyous when it broke out in his soul after his spiritual recovery in the previous chapter now, consistent again with Christian teachings, brings suffering, almost as a necessary proof of its reality. The temptations of Christ followed his Baptism. Siddhartha is disturbed by the boy's sullenness, his unhappiness, and tries to show only by action his love while resisting any rebuking. The boy responds not at all while Siddhartha never gives up this new thing, this passionate love for another person. Kamala had once told him, "You cannot love" and:

> It was true that he had never fully lost himself in another person to such an extent as to forget himself; he had never undergone the follies of love for another person. He had never been able to do this, and it had then seemed to him that this was the biggest difference between him and the ordinary people. But now, since his son was there, he, Siddhartha, had become completely like one of the people, through sorrow, through loving. He was madly in love, a fool because of love. Now he also experienced belatedly, for once in his life,

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[25] Unseld, p. 35.

> the strongest and strangest passion; he suffered tremendously through it and yet was uplifted, in some way renewed and richer (pages 124, 125).

His earlier realization that he was a fool, an ordinary person, through his awareness that knowledge served little, is now reinforced through this passionate participation in a distracting and self-obliterating love. He is doubly a "fool." He understands that all this is Sansara but that it is not worthless (page 125). Is this again a modification of Sansara as something to be transcended in favor of an incarnational Christian view that only in and through sharing Sansara, man's lot, can one be saved?

The boy finally flees and Siddhartha, not accepting enough his own "teaching" that each must find his own way, attempts to follow him and retrieve him to no avail. His love, while quite a normal experience, has all the earmarks of unrequited romantic love: it leaves him depressed, smarting empty (page 129). Now too the term "ordinary people" and Siddhartha's earlier claim to have become one of them take on more existential meaning. He enters Sansara with a vengeance as if into a kind of redemptive suffering and soul-opening experience. With ordinary people he shares "life's urges and desires" (page 132):

> Their vanities, desires, and trivialities no longer seemed absurd to him; they had become understandable, lovable and even worthy of respect. . . . These people were worthy of love and admiration in their blind loyalty, in their blind strength and tenacity. With the exception of one small thing, one tiny little thing, they lacked nothing that the sage and thinker had, and that was the consciousness of the unity of all life. And many a time Siddhartha even doubted whether this knowledge, this thought, was of such great value, whether it was not also perhaps the childish self-flattery of thinkers, who were perhaps only thinking children.(pages 132, 133).

The contempt and pride of the Samana and the sage have both been superseded and Siddhartha expresses a doubt here about what is a great part of the other competing theme. The competition of the themes is further evidenced in some of Siddhartha's last words, words to Govinda who appears for one last time:

> It seems to me, Govinda, that love is the most important thing in the world. It may be important to great thinkers to examine the world, to explain and despise it. But I think it is only important to love the world, not to despise it, not for us to hate each other, but to be able to regard the world and ourselves and all beings with love, admiration and respect (page 149).

2) The River and Vasudeva. Minguel Serrano in his little book on his conversations with Hesse mentions that Hesse said he learned to love the Hindu god Krishna from his grandfather and father.[26] Krishna is an avatar of the god Vishnu and is called at times Vasudeva after his father.[27] Hesse gives the holy and serene ferryman in this novel the name Vasudeva. Otherwise there is one fleeting reference to Krishna (page 152) and on to Vishnu (page 55). Too, devotion to Krishna, very common in India, a devotion of great personal love supported by romantic stories of Krishna's dealings with the human soul, finds no place in Siddhartha though other more intellectual forms of Hinduism do. Perhaps giving the name to the ferryman is supposed to be a compliment to both him and Krishna.

Whether intentionally or not Vasudeva also imitates well the characteristics usually ascribed to a bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism.

[26] Serrano, p. 24.

[27] Zaehner, Hinduism, p. 120.

These holy beings are thought to postpone their own entry into Nirvana (for which they are ready) in order to remain in the world of Sansara to help other men to their enlightenment. This unselfish function Vasudeva certainly serves well in regard to Siddhartha and it may further be symbolized in his vocation as ferryman, one who brings other to the other side. Once he realizes Siddhartha is at peace he leaves, wanders off into the forest, out of Siddhartha's life. On the other hand, all this about the bodhisattva need not be here at all; it seems that the idea of a holy man serving others as this man does requires no precedent other than the promptings of love and generosity.

With a slipperiness which is probably congenital with rivers this river takes on a different symbolic value for most of the rest of the book from what that value was surmised to be in the chapter on Siddhartha's "conversion." There it served the cleansing and renewing symbolism of baptismal water.

Ultimately, the river appropriately symbolizes the Taoist harmony which crowns Siddhartha's quest. First, with Vasudeva's help as he gave it to Siddhartha, its significance can be adduced from the story's last chapters. Siddhartha's newly awakened voice had told him: "Love this river, stay by it, learn from it" (page 104). Its lessons are nearly all related to Hesse's constant search for a proper disposition of the self.

The river is the voice of "Perpetual Becoming." This is one of the first secrets learned by Siddhartha from the river:

> He saw that the water continually flowed and flowed and yet it was always there; it was always the same and yet every moment it was new (page 111).

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The content of this lesson is largely metaphysical: there is no such thing as time (page 109); "Nothing was, nothing will be, everything has reality and presence" (page 110). The practical value of this for Siddhartha's quest is related to a very broad notion of unity. As the river is everywhere at the same time, at its source, here in front of you and at the ocean, so in life there is only the present. Man is part of the great stream of life and there is no discontinuity between him and any part of it nor between the assumed "parts" of his life. All is present now. This reflects the dominant notion of the deity in Siddhartha which is closest to the Hindu notion of Brahman, the All which embraces all that is and in which all that exists is. Whether Brahman is treated as a god or the god or not, the notion of some such universal being in which all exists seems to cut across the other divisions within Hinduism.[28] The lesson on time passes over into the more important lesson of the unity of all things, their eternity in Brahman, their consequent indestructability and from this into the notion of their harmony. First, a few more words on the unity motif exemplified by the river. The river embodies or contains within itself and expresses in its voice a unity of all the goals, desires, sorrows, suffering, as well as the more mundane and trivial elements of life, of every human life. All the voices, of good and evil, of sorrow and pleasure are all there and together form one sound, Om, perfection (pages 137, 138).

[28] The use of both Brahma and Brahman on page 145 of the English text and pages 725-726 of the German text is confusing, above all if intentional. Brahma is usually the term reserved for the creator god in Hinduism, a personified god; whereas Brahman is the "world-soul" or the eternal substance of the universe. It is with the latter that Atman, the now individualized souls, is meant to be reunited.

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> When Siddhartha listened attentively to this river, to this song of a thousand voices; when he did not listen to the sorrow or laughter, when he did not bind his soul to any one particular voice and absorb it in his Self, but heard them all, the whole, the unity; then the great son of a thousand voices consisted of one word: Om--perfection (page 138).

This is the theodicy of Siddhartha: evil, suffering, is only such as long as we consider it in a particular, specific way or think of it in terms of self; seen in the whole stream of existence its dissonance is absorbed into the harmony of a satisfying melody. Siddhartha's own wounds heal as soon he lets his Self merge into unity (page 138).

Already the fluid symbolism of the river has begun to drift into that of a harmony beyond words. And, if it will not sound unduly occult, this harmony beyond words is the last word in Siddhartha, is the final wisdom. Even while the wound of his lost son is still smarting in Siddhartha's breast he intuits this:

> Within Siddhartha there slowly grew and ripened the knowledge of what wisdom really was and the goal of his long seeking. It was nothing but a preparation of the soul, a capacity, a secret art of thinking, feeling and breathing thoughts of unity at every moment of life. This thought matured in him slowly, and it was reflected in Vasudeva's old childlike face: harmony, knowledge of the eternal perfection of the world, and unity (page 133).

Unity and harmony are difficult to distinguish and especially in this work; much of what has been said in the section above on unity would be redundant to repeat here: seeing the unity of all things in Brahman, the balancing really of good against evil, suffering against pleasure, accepting all this, allowing oneself to feel one with it, all this is also what is meant by harmony. The earlier quest for self or even for its conquest or obliteration is transcended once the self

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realizes this harmony with all that is and is, in consequence, really reduced in importance or, at least, in its awareness of its own importance. All the previous efforts, going back to Demian in fact, all the mental, ascetical and even sensual efforts to realize the self only lead to an isolated self which is really not "realized" or happy in that state.[29] The self only realizes its destiny or true goal when "oned" with the All, in harmony with everything that is.

> From that hour Siddhartha ceased to fight against his destiny. There shone in his face the serenity of knowledge, of one who is no longer confronted with conflict of desires, who has found salvation, who is in harmony with the stream of events, with the stream of life, full of sympathy and compassion, surrendering himself to the stream, belonging to the unity of all things (page 139).

Instead of "fighting" or conquest, this harmony requires acceptance and receptivity, a ceasing of striving and seeking. Siddhartha's hard-won wisdom on this score he passes on to Govinda when the old monk comes his way one last time still seeking:

> What could I say to you that would be of value, except that perhaps you seek too much, that as a result of your seeking you cannot find.
>
> When someone is seeking, said Siddhartha, it happens quite easily that he only sees the thing that he is seeking; that he is unable to find anything, unable to absorb anything, because he is only thinking of the thing he is seeking, because he has a goal, because he is obsessed with his goal. Seeking means: to have a goal; but finding means: to be free, to be receptive, to have no goal. You, O worthy one, are perhaps indeed a seeker, for in striving towards your goal, you do not see many things that are under your nose (page 141).

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[29] This all has reference to the notion of the two selves or two egos which will be developed below, pp. 28 ff.

What Siddhartha has come to certainly can be called Taoist and Hesse's attestations to the predominance of Chinese influence over against Hindu influence on this thought strengthens this conviction.[30] Here it will be adequate to point to some of the striking similarities and relationships. Tao itself is a pivotal word in this ancient Chinese religion; it means basically path or way and Huston Smith further explicates this by saying the way has three senses:

> First Tao is the way of ultimate reality. . . .
>
> Though Tao ultimately is transcendent, it is also immanent. In this secondary sense it is the way of the universe; the norm, the rhythm, the driving power in all nature, the ordering principle behind all life.
>
> In its third sense Tao refers to the way man should order his life to gear in with the way the universe operates.[31]

Simply put, man's task in Taoism is to bring himself into harmony with the way of the universe and nature, or better, to allow himself to surrender to that harmony. Undoubtedly, in Hesse's usual manner, all this is blended with the notion of Brahman in Siddhartha.

Further the choice of the river as the vehicle for Siddhartha's instruction in this harmony is distinctively Taoist even though Hesse may not utilize all the elements of its Taoist symbolism in his own work.

> The natural phenomenon which the Taoists say as bearing the closest resemblance to Tao itself was water. They were struck by the way it would support objects and carry them effortlessly on its tide. The Chinese characters for swimmer, deciphered, mean literally 'one who knows the nature of water.' Similarly one who knows the nature of the basic life-force knows that it will sustain him if he will only stop his thrashing and flailing and trust it to buoy him and carry him gently forward (Smith, page 191).

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[30] "I have been more inspired by the wisdom of China than by the Upanishads or the Vedanta. . . ." Hesse to Miguel Serrano in Serrano, page 10.

[31] Huston Smith, The Religions of Man (New York: The New American Library, 1958), pp. 184, 185.

Another concept, not referred to by Hesse by name at all but surely implicit, is wu wei.

The basic quality of life in tune with the universe is wu wei. . . .

> Wu wei is the supreme action, the precious suppleness, simplicity, and freedom that flows from us, or rather through us, when our private egos and conscious efforts yield to a power not their own. . . . The Tao Te Ching puts this point without wasting a single word. 'The way to do,' it says simply, 'is to be' (Smith, pages 189, 190).

Water was also seen by the Taoists as the prototype of wu wei: it adapts itself to its surroundings and:

> Yet despite its accommodation, water holds a power unknown to hard and brittle things. In a stream it follows the stones' sharp edges only to turn them in the end into pebbles, rounded to conform to its streamlined flow (Smith, page 191).

Vasudeva in fact tells Siddhartha that "water is stronger than rocks" (page 122). So the wu wei that seems so like Siddhartha's final virtue is not a merely passive resignation to things as they are but also a kind of strength.

Something encountered before, especially in Demian, and to be met in later works also occurs in Siddhartha and quite likely with Taoist resonance. It is the unity of opposites, the coincidence of opposites. It has been noted how the harmony which Siddhartha accepts and even enjoins on others involves seeing all disparate elements of the universe in one great unity and accepting their necessary coexistence. Speaking to Govinda Siddhartha says:

> . . . in every truth the opposite is equally true. For example, a truth can only be expressed and enveloped in words if it is one-sided. Everything that is thought and expressed in words is one-sided, only half the truth; it all lacks totality, completeness, unity. . . . Never

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> is a man or a deed wholly Sansara or wholly Nirvana; never is a man wholly a saint or a sinner. . . . (page 144).
>
> . . . the potential Buddha already exists in the sinner; . . . (page 145).

Again, without going far afield as Taoism one can certainly detect good Lutheran tradition too in this "simul justus et peccator" theology about man. Still, it would be absurd to rule out its Oriental relationship. Too, the whole notion of harmony, unity, the coincidentia oppositorum, the blurring of distinctions, the merger of all in the All may be carrying us back to Mutter. Significantly Siddhartha's point of departure in his life story, that which he leaves behind in his father. In what he finally arrives at, the river, symbolic of the life-current, flowing with typically feminine harmony and fluidity, uniting all otherwise disparate elements (or at least the disparity for which the masculine mind is often deemed responsible by virtue of its analytic character), is not the universal mother intimated? Maurice Benn says very well that grace (in the sense of the factor which brings salvation) in Siddhartha,

> consists in nothing but the final and complete deliverance from the father-principle.[32]

And the father-principle stands for the kind of reason that makes distinctions between good and evil, beautiful and ugly.

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[32] "An Interpretation of the Work of Hermann Hesse"(M.A. dissertation, University of London, 1948), p. 100.

Summary

Under nine subjects the matter extracted chronologically from Siddhartha relative to the Hessean quest for self-understanding will be summarized below. Nearly everyone of the subjects below has continuities with Demian and earlier works but in a few instances these are some new notes.

1) Siddhartha's life well illustrates one of Hesse's deepest and most persistent convictions: the individual must be ever ready to move on spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. He himself went through the various phases of Hindu religion, Buddhism, some Christianity and some Taoism, extracting from each something of worth. Change and, above all, the willingness to change, to make new beginnings, is essential. The river symbolizes a sort of ideal combination of continuity and constant change, "Perpetual Becoming." This appeared in Demian and recurs vividly in Steppenwolf.

2) As in Demian, there is an awareness of a voice within calling one on to his fate though this receives less explicit emphasis here and the voice is for a while stilled. Siddhartha illustrates a little more willingness to look outside the self for fate and destiny then did Demian.

3) The two novels are at one in insisting one must make his own mistakes as well as his own discoveries, that teachers can only serve very limited functions in the awakening of the self. When Siddhartha is tempted to reject this lesson and make himself an exception by "planning" his son's life, the younger Siddhartha flees the attempt and Siddhartha re-learns the lesson: "Wisdom is not

communicable" (page 144).

The experience which no one can have for someone else is varied. Both sense and intellect are to be listened to (page 50). Hesse seems to truly part company with any real or supposed Eastern neglect of sense experience and regards even the experience of the sordidness and anxiety of Sansaric life as valuable and not to be despised. All experience, no matter how regrettable from some moral viewpoint, is worth man's effort. Some lessons can only be learned through experiences that in themselves might not be commendable.

4) Like Sinclair Siddhartha knows that to reject all teachers and find his own path entails a chilly isolation. However, this does not receive the emphasis here that it did in Demian and its provisional character is clearly evident. The final word is unity, not isolation.

5) Consistent with the point just made, Hesse in Siddhartha does not endorse Demian's ideal: "And to lose yourself is a sin. One has to be able to crawl completely inside oneself, like a tortoise" (Demian, page 54). In Siddhartha from several standpoints losing the self is commended. The advice that Lohe once gave Kuhn (in Gertrude) on this score receives a kind of actualization. Though Siddhartha's ideal shifts throughout the tale there is some definite understanding that the self is best off lost or, at least, merged with something or someone more than itself. The self is realized once it is united with its true self. (See 9. below.) Siddhartha even dares speak of conquering the self, something that would have smacked of servility to Demian.

This losing of self brings us also to the new emphasis on love in

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Siddhartha, the kind of love in which one forgets and loses himself. Despite the anxiety and common worries that it entails Siddhartha considers it all worth it, better than serenity and peace without it. This love is especially prominent in the chapter described as Christian in its spiritual milieu.

6) The acceptance of some very essential elements in the Christian experience, the whole cycle of despair, grace, rebirth, a kind of spiritual childhood, all this is quite distinctive of Siddhartha and only faintly echoed, if at all, in Demian.

7) The Nietzschean-Demian ethos did attempt to make provision for a harmony with nature around us but this was obscured by the strong emphasis on self-creation. In Siddhartha harmony with nature is one of the most important elements in the final solution and is to be achieved more by receptivity than by conscious decision. The last word is surrender and acceptance rather than conquest and intellect.

8) The ideal of unity toward which Siddhartha tends in his quest is closely related to what was noted in regard to Mutter Eva in Demian. Explicit references to the universal mother are quite lacking in Siddhartha but the image of a male-female figure is once again here in Siddhartha's dream of embracing Govinda who becomes female at the moment. Furthermore the river does contain within its symbolism that total unity of opposites and of all qualities that was found before in the mother figure. Peace, unity, harmony, coincidentia oppositorum, a state beyond good and evil, a reuniting of the soul (Atman) with the All (Brahman)--these are all part of

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Siddhartha's final goal and expressed to him by the river and its voice. And if Siddhartha's quest is largely a going forth from the father principle, from the analytic mind (symbolized by his leaving his father), then to see the end of his quest as a return to the universal mother, or a discovery of her, is all the more likely.

9) In an effort to preserve some clarity in all of the preceding which is in itself fairly complex due to the intermingling of various strands of religious thought, treatment of a rather significant development in Hesse's thought about the self which surfaces here in *Siddhartha* has been deferred till now. This development owes its origins *apparently* to acquaintance with the Upanishads, the Vedanta tradition, in Hinduism. The order here is: a glance at a few texts in Siddhartha that touch this matter and then some explication of these texts with the help of some remarks of Hesse and references to Hinduism. Hesse's truly all-absorbing concern to understand the self and its ultimate disposition is well attested to by his excursion into this fairly difficult bit of Hinduism. As a young Brahmin Siddhartha speculates on the best of Brahminism. He muses on Atman:

> Was it not Atman, He alone, who had created it (the world)? . . . To whom else should one offer sacrifices, to whom else should one pay honor, but to Him, Atman, the Only One? And where was Atman to be found, where did He dwell, where did His eternal heart beat, if not within the Self, in the innermost, in the eternal which each person carried within him? But where was this Self, this innermost? It was not flesh and bone, it was not thought or consciousness (Page 6).

Westerners with a modicum of knowledge of Eastern religious thought will find this, possibly, confusing since our tendency is to simplify things by saying that Atman is the soul and Brahman is the "god" or

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the all to whom or to which the soul is to return. The matter is, as Hesse attests and scholars agree, somewhat more complex:

> It has often been said that the great achievement of the Upanishads is the so-called Brahman/Atman synthesis, that is, the identification of the individual soul (*atman*) with the ground of the universe (*brahman*). This is an over-simplification since in many passages *atman* means not the individual soul but the 'soul of the All' and is therefore merely another word for Brahman. To identify the two in this sense is pure tautology. So far as it is at all possible to summarize the teachings of the Upanishads we should say that they identify the deepest level of the subjective 'I' with the ground of the objective universe; either can be referred to as Brahman or Atman or, for that matter, Purusha who is either man, , the individual, or Cosmic man.[33]

Hence when Hesse in the passage above speaks of Atman as creator and capitalizes the pronoun referring to it he is consistent with what Zaehner says, no matter how much it may confuse the layman. Siddhartha goes on to say that to press onward towards the Self, "towards Atman" was the only thing worth seeking, yet the Brahmins, the guardians of this knowledge, knew a lot about it but none seem to actually experience this (pages 6, 7). And much of his search throughout the book is related to this quest despite a good number of side excursions.

What Siddhartha is developing here is the notion that to attain Atman is to pierce beneath the phenomenal or empirical self, ego, to this "innermost" which is also a self, "the eternal Self, that was neither body nor consciousness" (page 77)., Brahman or Atman, whichever, this innermost self is changeless unlike the phenomenal self. How to reach this innermost self and be disengaged from the móre superficial self is an age-old task of Hinduism that Hesse makes his own in the person of Siddhartha. Zaehner says apropos of all this:

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[33] Zaehner, Hinduism, p. 64.

> In the Upanishads Brahman is both changeless Being beyond space and time, the material cause of the universe, and its efficient cause as well. . . . It pervades all things, yet is other than what It pervades, controlling them from within: 'He is your Self, the Inner Controller, the Immortal.' 'He is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the ununderstood understander. Other than he there is no seer, other than he there is no hearer, other than he there is no thinker, other than he there is no understander. . . . (Hinduism, page 72).

And further:

> The Upanishads teach . . . that the human soul in its deepest essence is in some sense identical with Brahman, the unchanging something that is yet the source of all change. This soul, then, must be distinct from the ordinary empirical self which transmigrates from body to body carrying its load of karma with it. How to realize this eternal soul and how to disengage it from its real or imaginary connexion with the psychosomatic complex that thinks, wills, and acts, is from the time of the Upanishads onwards the crucial problem facing the Hindu religious consciousness (Hinduism, page 79).

This notion of the two selves, while not made explicit and final in Siddhartha is certainly there and is one of the real developments in Hesse's odyssey. Siddhartha's sense of unity with and harmony with all that the river symbolizes and his witness that he felt his soul merged in it is probably to be understood, despite the Taoist influences, also as his release from the empirical soul or self and his attainment to the non-empirical Atman or Brahman. Self-realization comes when the empirical soul is transcended and unity with Brahman or Atman alone is achieved.

Gerhart Mayer quotes a letter of Hesse's affirming the hold of these notions on his mind and what is said confirms the analysis here

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presented of this matter in Siddhartha. The content of Hesse's letter paraphrased is this: there are two 'I's in each of us; one is the subjective, empirical, individual 'I' which shows itself changeable and manifests our weakness and obstinacy; the other 'I' is concealed in the first but not interchangeable with it. This is the high, holy 'I' (Atman of the Indians). It is not personal but is our share in God, in life, in the all, both impersonal and hyperpersonal. The lower self, the first 'I', must be overcome in order to gain a hearing for the Überpersonlichen Selbst which is Atman. When this happens, when the second 'I', the non-empirical one, shines through or is arrived at, then:

> Es ist der Vorgang der 'Selbstverwirklichung', der 'Menschwerdung', wie der Dichter ihn zu bezeichnen pflegt.[34]

English translation:

> We have the process of self-realization, of becoming human, as the writer (Hesse) is in the habit of calling it.

In Demian, the first of the ten novels in which the Weg nach Innen is pursued with singleness of mind, self-realization is sought, by and large, in a lofty self-creation and the resultant isolation of the self. An attempt, but hardly more than that, was made in the closing pages to relate the self in its isolation to the community of men. In Siddhartha the self's realization is discovered to consist in a merging of the self with, or forgetting of the self in, the higher and truer self which is one with the All (Brahman or Atman) or, alternatively, in a profound unity and harmony of the self with the universe.

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[34] Die Begegnung des Christentums mit den asiastischen Religionen im Werk Hermann Hesses, pp. 45, 46.

III. *Steppenwolf*

Summary

Even for Hesse *Steppenwolf* is an unusually reflective and didactic novel. The narrator tells of Harry Haller's arrival at his aunt's home to rent a room. Haller is the Steppenwolf, the wolf from the steppes. The narrator records his poor impression of this strange man, nearly fifty years of age. Haller is irregular in his habits, interested deeply in poetry and music, a solitary who spends his days in study and writing, and his evenings restlessly drinking. The priggish and prim narrator comes to appreciate Steppenwolf despite all the aspects of his life so at variance with his own bourgeois ideals.

The opening narrative finally ends with an introduction to a memoir, a manuscript, left by the Steppenwolf. It is really a narrative of his inner life and struggles of a man split within himself and feeling cut off from all ordinary human society. Which elements in the Steppenwolf's story are to be taken as objective facts and events and which as fantasies, dreams, etc., is unimportant insofar as *all* revolve around and explicate further the nature of the Steppenwolf's problems in living on the fringes of ordinary bourgeois society. Early in the story Haller sees strange texts appearing like posters on walls inviting him to a "Magic Theatre for madman only:"

> Yes, I understood the invitation to madness and the jettison of reason and the escape from the clogs of convention in surrender to the unbridled surge of spirit and fantasy.[35]

In the street he is handed a booklet, *Treatise on the Steppenwolf*. It is a more formal study of Haller's mental and spiritual problems, largely in terms of his relations to the bourgeois world and the wolf-man dichotomy.

The Steppenwolf's suicidally-directed life is next punctuated by a chance meeting with an old acquaintance. At his home the wolf in Haller breaks out stridently and attacks the wife's favorite and sentimental picture of Goethe. This helps confirm his determination to avoid ordinary society. "I could not bear this tame, lying, well-mannered life any longer" (page 83).

But he wanders into the Black Eagle, a dance hall, and there meets a sympathetic prostitute ready to listen to him and console him. Her name turns out to be Hermine. She under-

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[35] Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, trans. Basil Creighton, revised by Joseph Mileck and Horst Frenz (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 72. References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page 25). The original German of this novel is found in *Gesammelte Schriften*, , volume iv. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, iv, page __).

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takes completing Haller's education by teaching him to dance (he had learned all the difficult things, like Greek and philosophy but never dancing), putting a girl in his bed, introducing him to drugs, jazz and variations on sexual love. Finally she gets him to a fancy dress ball--all this against Haller's better instincts.

He goes to the ball and has a series of strange experiences there, a series of fantastic vignettes involving historical characters and distortions of present reality. He meets Hermine there dressed as a boy, Hermann (reminiscent of a boyhood friend), and falls in love with her. He dances, talks with Pablo, a Latin American saxophonist of handsome looks and light heart; Pablo takes him into a sort of hall of mirrors or corridor of doors each labeled with mottos such as "Laugh Yourself to Bits" and "All Girls are Yours." These form the Magic Theatre mentioned before and in them Haller has a great variety of experiences. He talks with the Immortals (including especially Goethe and Mozart); he takes part in a war of man against the machine, especially the auto; makes up for all his past inhibitions with girls and, in fulfillment of an earlier prophecy of Hermine's, kills her while she sleeps with Pablo. Mozart instructs him at length in humor, in looking at reality with a sort of superior irony; he also tells Haller to listen to a radio playing Haydn and in this to see the distortion that all beauty must go through before it reaches men. All this final section is intelligible in terms of Haller's re-education in understanding life and the self and accepting them. This theme will constitute much of the matter of what follows.

Introduction

Carl Jung distinguishes novels as psychological and visionary. The first are, he says, by no means as intriguing to the psychologist as one might suppose for in them the writer has already given us the psychological interpretation. The visionary novel, on the contrary, rather perplexes its readers and provides ample field for psychological and other interpretations. In the visionary novel Jung says:

> We are astonished, taken aback, confused, put on our guard or even disgusted--and we demand commentaries and explanations. We are reminded in nothing of everyday, human life, but rather of dreams, night-time fears and the dark recesses of the mind that we sometimes sense with misgiving. The reading public for the most part repudiates this kind of writing--unless, indeed, it is coarsely sensational--and even the literary critic feels embarrassed by it.[36]

Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf, published in 1927, is such a visionary piece, and at first readers are suitably "astonished, taken aback, confused, . . . even disgusted." Hesse's ever-fluctuating fortunes in his native Germany were down shortly after the success of Demian; Siddhartha does not seem at the time to have made much of an impact. Steppenwolf only served to shock and "embarrass" readers of the time by its "slumming" in the demimonde of jazz, drugs and sexual experimentation, by its streaks of cynicism and bitterness. Its essential hopefulness and confidence were probably obscured for many by these elements. The novel further alienated Hesse from Germany itself by its attack on German intellectuals for their acquiescence in their country's politics, a rather rare example in his novels of political concern. The impenitent Germans of the decade were confirmed in their distrust of Hesse (he had opposed Germany's part in the War) by this criticism and by the apparent "degeneracy" of Steppenwolf. The seething period that had been inaugurated by the appearance of Demian and then seemingly quieted by Siddhartha was not done with yet. Hesse had been married for a few months in 1923 to Ruth Wenger but was now alone at Casa Camuzzi in Montagnola. The shakiness and uncertainty of any solution offered in Steppenwolf as well as the temptations to despair, cynicism and lust are well mirrored in a collection of poems Hesse published at about the same time called Krisis. A few lines from these with Mark Boulby's translations will illustrate this:

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[36] Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1933), p. 158.

> Rot blüht die Blume der Lust,
> Rosig lächelt die Knospe auf deiner Brust,
> Schaudert bebend unter meiner Zunge.
> Einst war ich ein kleiner Junge,
> Lernte Griechisch und ging zur Konfirmation,
> Eines frommen Vaters vielversprechender Sohn.
> (Red blooms the flower of desire,
> Rosy is the smiling bud upon your breast,
> It shudders trembling beneath my tongue.
> Once I was a little boy,
> Learned Greek and went to confirmation,
> A devout father's promising son.)
> (Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art,
> page 168).

Or, in reference to the cool, starry spaces of the Immortals about which there will be more in Steppenwolf:

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Aber dies kühlen Sternenräume,
Diese Schauer der Unendlichkeit
Sind ja leider nur geliebte Träume.
(But these cool starry spaces,
These shivers of eternity,
I'm afraid they're just beloved dreams.)
(Boulby, page 170).

As always the novel seems to reflect closely the states of Hesse himself, a state now of floundering and fluctuation, of excess and experimentation.

Evidently the serene acceptance and harmony with the universe with which *Siddhartha* ends was not, at least not yet, Hesse's own *interiorized* or *lived* conviction. In *Steppenwolf* there is a more feverish and perspiring seeking for self-understanding than was visible in the more cerebral endeavor of Emil Sinclair. Despite the great dissimilarities of style and pace in *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf* Hesse himself regarded these two as complementary.[37] For now it may be said that *Siddhartha* affirms the rightness and necessity of a merging with Nature, with the Mother, while *Steppenwolf* argues the necessity for the dominance, of the world of *Geist* (spirit, mind) the world of the Father, at least in Hesse's own case.

A few more words on Steppenwolf's relationship with the preceding novels and then a look at its form. Along with almost any of the earlier novels *Steppenwolf* sees the bourgeoisie as the bête noire of all creative men and as a leveller that tends to suffocate or martyr geniuses and unusual men. *Steppenwolf* reiterates Hesse's theory of creativity (*Gertrude* and *Rosshalde*) as originating in suffering. Suicide is, if anything, a more constant preoccupation of Harry Haller than of any earlier character in the preceding six novels though all at least gave it some consideration. The practice of reflecting the protagonist in other characters or even of dividng his total psyche among a number is most evident in *Steppenwolf*. The poet or writer in his characters represents "the various facets and aspects of a higher unity, in my opinion, of the poet's soul" (page 60). Finally, the extreme individuation towards which Sinclair in *Demian* was tending, as toward an ideal, is here seen as not only the intellectual's ideal but his bane also. Haller does not spend much time rejoicing in his isolation but is open, at least, to some other solution which will bring him back into contact with mankind, notwithstanding its bourgeois stupidities. Underlying all the continuities and explaining new developments is Hesse's constant quest for an understanding of and adequate disposition of the self, really a quest for perfection.

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[37] Serrano, p. 20.

Form

One who is not a specialist in music can only hazard some rough-hewn suggestions about the nature of *Steppenwolf's* musicality which Hesse himself attests (Boubly, pages 163 ff). *Siddhartha* was musical, rhythmic, in its language, in the sequence of phrases, in its repetition, in its parallelism. Coming to *Steppenwolf* from *Siddhartha* one is aware of no similar serenity of liturgical cadence in its language or form. But Hesse speaks of it as being in sonata form, of the *Treatise* as an intermezzo (Boulby, page 163).

Steppehwolf lacks the usual chapter divisions and hence easily

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gives the casual reader the impression of utter formlessness. While this is not quite an accurate account of the work, it is consonant with the state of Harry Haller's mind that his life should present a chaotic appearance.

The work opens with a Preface by the young man who observes Harry Haller in the rooming house where he has taken lodging. Following this is the beginning of the manuscript which Haller left about his own life and then the manuscript within the manuscript, the Treatise. The remainder of the novel narrates the events of Haller's life during this time and the experiences encompassed by the Magic Theatre. Theodore Ziolkowski has elaborated in detail how all this fulfills the sonata form of which Hesse himself has written.[38]

After the nephew's view of Harry Haller, a fundamentally sympathetic view by one not temperamentally of Haller's type, comes the Treatise. The Treatise on the Steppenwolf is distinct from the rest of the work in presenting with lofty assurance a sort of universalization of the experience. It provides a sort of philosophy of the Steppenwolf and delineates his relation to the bourgoisie. It argues the need for a better model than the over-simple wolf-man dichotomy to explain him. It is more abstract than either Haller's life, as described earlier or the pageant or dance of wild events that ensues later. Hesse calls it an intermezzo.

The concluding part of the novel, its main body, consists of six divisions in the text, not labeled chapters. In these occur the significant meetings of Haller with Hermine and her friends and with Mozart and the Immortals as well as the bizarre and fast-moving events of the Magic Theatre. However one might attempt to describe it in more technical musical terms this last section is often hectic and full of dramatic movements from dance-halls to the realm of the Immortals.

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[38] For details, see Ziolkowski's The Novels of Hermann Hesse (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 189 ff.

Treatise on the Steppenwolf (pages 40-66)

In the midst of his miserable meanderings around the town where he has taken up lodging Harry Haller has strange experiences: meeting shadowy figures who flash strange signs before him, seeing odd mottoes on walls. Finally one of these figures hands him a tract-type pamphlet. On the cover is the title: Treatise on the Steppenwolf. Not for Everybody. This treatise represents a rare kind of writing in a work of fiction: a rationale for the story, an incipient "anthropology" of the Steppenwolf type of character, an analysis of such a type with suggestions for his recovery. This will be a convenient guide to the Steppenwolf and the story of the book will illustrate this theory. Hesse himself warns us in a letter, however, that in neither Demian nor Steppenwolf does he offer fully developed ideals or commands; both are experiments designed to serve or assist in the hallowing or perfecting of life.[39]

"There was once a man, Harry, called the Steppenwolf" (page 40). So begins the Treatise. What follows then is some explanation and criticism of Harry's psychology which allows for its broader extension

[39] Unseld, p. 51.

to like personalities. The Steppenwolf is unhappy, most ill at ease, because he senses within himself two natures, that of a man and that of a wolf, in continual enmity (*Todfeindschaft*, GS, iv, page 226). Each part observes the other when it has dominance: the wolf to mock and scorn every good human action and thought; the man to spoil and denigrate any wolfish activity or pleasure. This not only makes Haller unhappy but offends those around him who might love him. They are inevitably frightened or disappointed to uncover the other side of him and he, understandably, wishes "to be loved as a whole" (page 43). Going beyond Haller the author of the *Treatise* suggests that there are more such men, especially artists.[40] In fact, recalling here *Rosshalde* and *Gertrude*, the resultant suffering is what forces and drives the artist to create some meaning out of the chaos of life (page 55). So, as wolf-man, Harry Haller and his like are torn apart and their frequent ruptures with friends are part of an even more profound rupture with all of society.

From his youth he had sought and preserved independence (*Unabhängigkeit*, GS, iv, page 229); he had either avoided or strongly hated, when it was inevitable, the customary discipline and obedience demanded by offices, hours and the army. "In the beginning his dream and his happiness, in the end it was his bitter fate" (page 46). His independence was now his agony. His youth might have been Emil Sinclair's but what is here seems to be an advance on *Demian*, as *Siddhartha* was, in its recognition of the unsatisfactory and incomplete

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[40] The name Harry Haller, with the same initials as Hermann Hesse, underscores the autobiographical character of the story.

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character of even the loftiest isolation. The rarefied solitude of the superior man, the *Übermensch*, once attained becomes no longer his wish but "his lot and his sentence"; ". . . his freedom was a death. . . ." (page 46). And the isolation of his state, his hatred of self make him suicidal, whether or not he ever commits actual suicide. Steppenwolves see death as a release instead of looking on a fully-realized life as a bulwark against death. This view of death will echo in *Narcissus and Goldmund*. Harry Haller appoints his fiftieth birthday as the date on which he will kill himself presuming things follow their presently hellish direction.

Haller's isolation from other men, his break with his human environment, is most evident against a backdrop of the bourgeois world which largely fills that milieu. The writer next considers this and what he says here probably as much as anything accounts for the great closeness many of today's willing dropouts from society feel to Hesse's work. As elsewhere in Hesse (e.g. Sinclair's attitude toward his parents' home) the outsider views the middle-class world with a mixture of contempt and envy. Haller nearly kneels in adoration of the cleanliness and order of his landlady's house while still feeling very much outside this world and contemptuous of its values.

> He is not at ease however with violent and exceptional persons or with criminals and outlaws, and he took up his abode always among the middle classes, with whose habits and standards and atmosphere he stood in a constant relation, even though it might be one of contrast and revolt. . . .
>
> Brought up, as he was, in a cultivated home in the approved manner, he never tore part of his soul loose from its conventionalities even after he had long since individualized himself to a degree beyond its scope and freed himself

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> from the substance of its ideals and beliefs (page 51).

It will be enormously helpful for an understanding of the ideal that is to be set forth for the Steppenwolf if the writer's analysis of the bourgeois ideal which is its necessary background or foil is recounted. In describing bourgeois life as a life of balance or a search for balance which countenances neither saintliness or profligacy (page 51) one hears echoes of Nietzsche's strictures on the bourgeoisie and its morality; "morality as timidity" he calls it.[41] Elsewhere Nietzsche wrote of the bourgeois ideal:

> We no longer see anything these days that aspires to grow greater; instead, we have a suspicion that things will continue to go downhill, becoming ever thinner, more placid, smarter, cosier, more ordinary, more indifferent, more Chinese, more Christian. . .[42]

and:

> Not your sin but your thrift cries to heaven; your meanness even in your sin cries to heaven.[43]

The echoes or affinities in Hesse:

> *He* (the bourgeois) *will never surrender himself either to lust or to asceticism* (page 52) (Italics mine).
>
> The absolute is his abhorrence. He may be ready to serve God, but not by giving up the fleshpots. He is ready to be virtuous, but likes to be easy and comfortable in this world as well.
>
> Now the bourgeois treasures nothing more highly than the self (rudimentary as his may be). And so at the cost of intensity he achieves his own preservation and security. His harvest is a quiet mind which he prefers to being possessed by God,

[41] *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 105.

[42] *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p. 177.

[43] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 126 in Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche*.

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> as he does comfort to pleasure, convenience to liberty, and a pleasant temperature to that deathly inner consuming fire. The bourgeois is consequently by nature a creature of weak impulses, anxious, fearful of giving himself away and easy to rule (page 52).

This part of the Treatise also uses one of Nietzsche's favorite epithets for the bourgeoisie, "herd" (page 53).

Against this background of nervous possession of the self, no matter how paltry, and fear of surrendering it totally to anyone or anything, the author of the Treatise proposes what is his chief point: that beyond even the highest amd most refined individuation (Demian would say such as that of a Christ or Nietzsche) lies the more ultimate and satisfying goal of self-dissolution, self-surrender and concomitant absorption in what is greater. Before coming to an explanation of what the Treatise means by self-dissolution there is another attitude of mind which the Treatise commends with nearly equal energy, that of humor. Humor and self-dissolution are presented as devices for coping with the problem of extreme individuation. This latter defines the artist or the Steppenwolf in the eyes of middle-class society. A consideration of this individuation will lead up to the Treatise's commendation of humor and from that to the concept of self-dissolution.

Individuation is that process by which individual humans develop particular characteristics and that potential which differentiates them from others with the same basic human nature. This, indeed, is prized by the middle-class--"his ideal is not to give up but to maintain his own identity" (page 52). But the higher or more intense form of individuation exemplified by Demian's ideal and which entices its possessor to unconventional behavior, to being his own law, etc., this is, again, an offense against the much-valued balance. Yet, the Treatise claims, the bourgeoisie survive because of the elasticity of its society which tolerates to a degree "a large number of strong and wild natures who share the life of the fold" (page 53). It all seems to mean that bourgeois individuation, the "acceptable" type, is of the sort most men reach almost inevitably with the passage of a few years and then, through typically human inertia and reluctance to change, accept and fortify. Those who forge beyond this, who have answered the "call to unconditioned life," pass beyond the pale of bourgeois respectability (page 53). The life of a Steppenwolf is, in this, at variance with the bourgeoisie:

> . . . we find him distinct from the bourgeois in the higher development of his individuality. . . (page 53).

It is not individuation itself which is in dispute but the degree of individuation to be permitted. If the individual's development is such that he remains anchored in the gravity of the "parent constellation of the bourgeoisie" he is no extreme criticism of the parent (page 54). "Despising the bourgeoisie, and yet belonging to it, they add to its strenth and glory; for in the last resort they have to share their beliefs in order to live" (page 54). The Steppenwolf or artist in this environment resigns himself and makes compromises. If he should break through the bourgeois atmosphere and catapult into the "untrammelled realms of space" his fate becomes tragic.

> The few who break free seek their reward in the unconditioned and go down in splendor. They wear the thorn crown and their number is small (page 54).

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This elite is formed of the tragic heroes of mankind. As pointed out in Beneath the Wheel such heroes and geniuses are always honored posthumously by the bourgeoisie. These are the men who suffer, are crucified, rejected, driven insane for the sake of living out their personal destiny totally. Implicit in all this is the teaching that the relationship of the bourgeoisie and the alienated falls into two types ordinarily. 1) Either the outsider remains in the ambiance of his antagonist and uncomfortably compromises himself.

> . . . they live under an evil star in a quite considerable affliction; and in this hell their talents ripen and bear fruit (page 54).

2) Or the lone wolf may, if his strength permits, follow the stellar track of the few who dare leave the gravitational force of the bourgeois world. Their lot is noble and tragic.

While the Treatise recognizes these two alternatives it is most concerned to commend another, humor. As in the first possibility mentioned, the outsider remains within bourgeois society and profits that structure. But they "have a third kingdom left open to them, an imaginary and yet a sovereign world, humor."

> The lone wolves who know no peace, these victims of unceasing pain to whom the urge for tragedy has been denied and who can never break through the starry space, who feel themselves summoned thither and yet cannot survive in its atmosphere--for them is reserved, provided suffering has made their spirits tough and elastic enough, a way of reconcilement and an escape into humor. (der versöhnliche Ausweg in den Humor, GS, iv, 239) (page 54).

Once again the stark, cold isolation of the Demian ideal, while not rejected entirely, is seen as practically out of the question for any but a very few. In works not considered in this paper, works that appeared after Demian and before Steppenwolf, Hesse experimented with

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the ideal of isolation and found it not viable; see especially *Klein und Wagner* and *Klingsors Letzter Sommer*. So the wolf, the outsider, who falls short of tragedy and yet is "as rich in gifts as in afliction" is left with humor (page 55). And humor, as offered to the outsider here, is no mean solution; it may have a light touch but it is not something frivolous or flippant. Indeed it is "*perhaps the most inborn and brilliant achievement of the spirit*" (page 55) (Italics mine). Without trying here to exhaust its content since it will be treated later, this much can be drawn from the *Treatise*.

Humor is no mere smile creasing the face in resignation to life's ills. Nor is it a supercilious view of mundane matters. It becomes a way out (*Ausweg*) and a means of reconciliation (*versöhnliche*) only for those who have earned it: "provided suffering has made their spirits tough and elastic enough . . ." (page 54). Humor born of suffering, provided it is not cynical, cannot be faulted with lack of depth. This seems necessary to state since humor enjoys such a low estate especially among those who "seriously" think about solutions to life's enigmas.

Detachment might be another name for this humor if recourse is made to the vocabulary of mysticism. The results of the "humorous" view of the world are remarkably like the general teaching of the *Bhagavadgita* and of the Chinese Taoists and specified passages in St. Paul. Hesse says:

> To live in the world as though it were not the world, to respect the law and yet to stand above it, to have possessions as though 'one possessed nothing,' to renounce as though it were no renunication, all these favorite and often formulated propositions of an exalted worldly wisdom, it is in the power of humor alone to make efficacious (page 55).

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St. Paul:

> I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; . . . let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it (I Cor. 7:29-31).

There also seem to be in this delineation of humor some elements of the typically Hessean search for a stance beyond good and evil. He says:

> Now it is possible to be possessed by God and to affirm the sinner, and vice versa, but it is not possible for either saint or sinner (or for any other of the unconditioned) to affirm as well that lukewarm mean, the bourgeois (pages 54-55).

Humor like sanctity can affirm the sinner. This is all quite cryptic and aphoristic here; further explanations will have to wait. But in humor there is visible a transcending ideal much like that so often symbolized in Hesse's writings by the hermaphroditic figure embracing all contradictories within it.

Self-knowledge of the kind which the Steppenwolf has evaded is fundamental to such humor. Beyond taking one's self seriously is the higher state of taking one's self lightly, recognizing one's foolishness and furtiveness, being able even to surrender the self. Also humor seems to include the admission that the chaos within one's self is commensurate with that which is without. To see all this chaos in its inevitability is to begin to order it, and, insofar as humor enables a man to correctly evaluate segments of reality, it also is assisting in their ordering.

Order, perfection, salvation were all, for Hesse, concerns primarily of the individual. Therefore the essential questions with which he grappled in his fiction were always in regard to the self. In Steppenwolf the questions are basically: Is there one self in an individual? Or are there many selves in an individual? Is there, perhaps, no self? Is the self to be realized, perfected, individualized, obliterated, merged with something else, forgotten, given up, surrendered or overcome? Steppenwolf is a climactic or, very possibly, the climactic work in Hesse's quest. In no later work did he pursue this question so intensely and totally as here while the earlier works were all part of the crescendo that reached its peak in Hesse in his late forties.

The earliest works which have already been treated saw the individual attempting to enter into life, hopeful of finding himself there. Life and the external forces that compose it were seen as exterior elements in one's fate or destiny with which an accomodation had to be made. But even in Rosshalde the individual perceived that destiny and fate are not merely external forces but powers within to be awakened or realized through deliberate, willed action. Demian experimented with a most extreme form of autonomy, of self-creation, and its destination was the independent and isolated self. Hesse soon saw this as possibly an ideal for a few but not a realistic one for himself. He embarked in following works on another course: instead of making life by sheer force of will he would attempt to allow himself effortlessly to sink into it. In Siddhartha his eternal quest was clothed in Oriental garb. There the aim was to merge with all of nature and reality rather than to attempt to transcend them or remake them. There was at least an illusion of transcending reality insofar as the

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merging of the self was conceived of as a merging with the All, Brahman, that divine substratum of all reality so little distinguishable from reality itself.

The final point to be made about the teaching of the Treatise concerns the solution offered in Steppenwolf to the self's destiny or goal. The self, most essentially and absolutely, must be surrendered, dissolved. Understanding what is proposed entails the theory of a "fall" of man and his redemption given us in Steppenwolf by Hesse. Despite elements that may appear bizarre at first reading, the Hesse theory is itself at least an echo of Christian tradition in his thought. To make this clear and also to throw more light on this theory it will be good to review briefly here a skeletal outline of the Christian tradition. Man in his origins was a creation of God, set by him on earth in a position of responsibility and happiness. But man grew restive, for whatever reasons, under the hegemony of God and by an act of disobedience threw it off and became separated from God. Biblical tradition sees as a corollary man's separation from his fellow men (hate, war, prejudice, etc.), from nature itself and his environment and finally within himself (the battle of sense against spirit, selfishness against love, etc.). God's effort, from then on, is to bring men freely to a reunion with him and with each other. Christ represents the most intense point of God's effort and its exemplary realization. Christ is to draw all men to himself and through and in himself to God the Father. The Holy Spirit is instrumental in this and the Pentecost experience is a prefiguring of the ultimate reunion of man both with man and with God. Though

Christian tradition sees this union as being accomplished primarily through man's union with others in Christ, still there is also a strong emphasis on the reunion of the individual with God.

The Hessean theory omits all reference to a personal God such as Biblical tradition knows; omits references to Christ and his work or to the place of the resurrection in man's restoration to unity with God. There is no interval between creation and fall. Birth itself is the separation, the severance, that must be overcome.

> From the very start there is no innocence and no singleness. Every created thing, even the simplest, is already guilty, already multiple (page 63).
>
> Am Anfang der Dinge ist nicht Unschuld und Einfalt; alles Erschaffene, auch das scheinbar Einfachste, ist schon schuldig, ist schon vielspältig, . . . (GS, iv, page 249).[44]

And later in the same paragraph:

> All births mean separation from the All, the confinement within limitation, the separation from God, the pangs of being born ever anew (page 64).

Man comes from the All (Brahman)--issuing forth, being born, he is by definition separated from the All and from all others coming from the All, made specific and individual. How or why this happens is not accounted for in Hesse's treatment. It is a primal fact. Given all this, the goal of man cannot be just to perpetuate or harden this individual status which keeps him separate from all others and from the All and he cannot go back.

> The way to innocence, to the uncreated and to God leads on, not back, not back to the world or to the child, but ever further into sin, ever deeper into human life (page 64).

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[44] The first line might be translated: From the very start there is no guiltlessness and no innocence.

One must minimize the division or separation by splitting the self up indefinitely, dissolving it till it is identified with every other bit of reality. In this way it returns to its union with the All from the other side one might say. The Steppenwolf is "only at the beginning of a long pilgrimage toward the ideal harmony . ." (page 63). The All is after all both a kind of God (source of all that is, Brahman) and identical with all that has been created or exists. So one comes from the All as God and returns to the All as reality by identifying with all that is, by a widening of the self to include everything.

> The return into the All, the dissolution of painful individuation, the reunion with God means the expansion of the soul until it is able once more to embrace the All (page 64).

Thus both Biblical tradition and Hesse share the conviction of an original rupture within man and in all his vital relations: relations to God, to other men and to nature. Some reunion, some rapprochement, of the now disparate parts is the goal. A significant section of the Treatise and much of the novel are concerned to suggest means to this end. It is developed in this manner.

In conceiving of himself as a wolf-man Haller is guilty of a fiction (page 56); he is utilizing a delusive formula, an artless simplification (page 58). It is a forcing of the truth of man's complexity and interior contradictions into this narrow division in order to somehow make these contradictions manageable and comprehensible (pages 56-57). Such a simplification insults the richness of the interior life of a man like Haller and it denigrates his supposed two constituents, for even the wolf should be seen not to be simply a wild and dangerous beast but as one who has other moments. "The wolf, too, has his abysses" (page 63). By reducing the Steppenwolf or man in general to such a simple twofold division Haller commits the mistake a gardener would in viewing all of his plants solely from the viewpoint of their edibility (page 65). By way of some pedagogical consolation for Haller who is being subjected to all this devastating criticism the author of the Treatise concedes that a view of man as twofold is an advance, however slight, over the usual view of man as a unit.

Yet Haller is guilty of another offense. The simplistic twofold division of man is not only inaccurate but unfair to both parties. It ascribes to the human part a host of noble qualities that are not always present by any means and does the wolf the injustice of ascribing to it all the baser qualities. But beasts are not merely the source of beastly qualities; they also show such virtues and attitudes as gentleness and sadness.

The Treatise teases with its method of alternate commendation and severe qualification of almost every mythology set up to explain the human person. It drives the reader on to new and more radical, more refined apprehension of human nature. The wolf-man model is an advance on the one-soul/one-body notion. Then the author will suggest that there are hundreds or thousands of selves in "one" human being (page 57). Once this has been clarified and seen as plausible the reader will be invited to rid his mind totally of any notion of a subsistent self or individual "Ich" or any such bundle.

> Harry consists of a hundred or a thousand selves, not of two. His life oscillates, as everyone's does, not merely between two poles, such as the body and the spirit, the saint and the sinner, but between thousand and thousands (pages 57-58).

When Demian was considered the seven characters in the novel were seen as facets of Sinclair's own interior. Here Hesse makes a similar point: that the individual characters in a play or novel may well be reflecting the various selves of their creator. He sees this in Goethe's Faust, but faults Goethe for allowing Faust to forget this:

> When Faust, in a line immortalized among schoolmasters and greeted with a shudder of astonishment by the Philistine, says: 'Two souls, alas, do dwell within my breast!' he has forgotten Mephisto and a whole crowd of other souls that he has in his breast likewise (page 60).

The bizarre jumble of happenings, events, experiences, through which Harry Haller will later pass is prefigured in the abstract words of the Treatise:

> In reality, . . . every ego, so far from being a unity is in the highest degree a manifold world, a constellated heaven, a chaos of forms, of states and stages, of inheritances and potentialities (page 59).

In the Magic Theatre, in the corridor of mirrors and doors at the masked ball, Haller will give or be brought to give some scope to the chaos of forms, to all the stages and states, all the potentialities, within himself. The thoroughness with which this will be done is undoubtedly what must have distrubed some of the novel's first readers and what still makes the book too catholic for conventional readers. Haller will participate in a great number of events and experiences which are seemingly treated as on one level of value even over Haller's own predilection for some selectivity. The potentialities of a single human being are understood to be of such diversity and richness that the writer calls on the Hindu notion of incarnations to further bolster the theme. One lifetime, in other words, is hardly adequate for the realization or activation of even one man's potential (page 59).

> The breast and the body are indeed one, but the souls that dwell in it are not two, nor five, but countless in number. Man is an onion made up of a hundred integuments, a texture made up of many threads (page 60).

All this reiteration of man's complexity, his infinite variety of selves, has been leading up to the doctrine of no self at all. It only seems paradoxical; if one splits the self continually and into ever finer pieces it is eventually so disintegrated as to eliminate any notion of singleness. This is clearly related, especially from the writer's reference to Buddhist Yoga, to the Buddhist doctrine of Anatta, no self. Whether the Buddhist doctrine of Anatta is to be understood primarily as metaphysical or primarily as pragmatic is debated, though the whole emphasis of Buddha's teaching would suggest it must be the latter. For the writer of the Treatise the value of the doctrine seems to lie in the practical order as will be clarified below. The Treatise writer sees a major difference of East and West in just this matter and hence, undoubtedly, his great effort to explain it to his Western readers:

> The human merry-go-round sees many changes: the illusion that cost India the efforts of thousands of years to unmask is the same illusion that the West has labored just as hard to maintain and strengthen (page 60).

The goal of the Treatise's psychology then is certainly not to facilitate adjustment or to establish identity. Rather, the goal he sets before the Steppenwolf is the overcoming of the illusion of the

"I" in favor of a widening of the personality. He would have Steppenwolf identify with and embrace all that is, ultimately to become one with the All which does embrace and is everything by definition. Rather than individuationg the personality yet further, defining its personality more precisely, the Treatise aims to have the reader absorb and assimilate himself to all human yearnings and strivings which have some resonance, apparently, in every human soul. The delusion that the self is unitary and perfected by everheightened individuation must be overcome in favor of its disintegration. Conventions, literature, psychology, all the West's cultural endeavors, have served to propagate the illusion of the self. As long as men pursue the ideal of ever more refined individuality they alienate themselves still further from all of mankind and from the All. The more highly individualized the personality is, the more its possessor is concerned to maintain and solidify it. The agonies of the Steppenwolf are in proportion to his particularity; his loneliness and desire for death are rooted in his culturally-originated selfishness.

What is the Steppenwolf to do in practice? He is given a program in the Treatise which certainly is no placebo since it promises no immediate or easily foreseeable surcease from the sufferings of loneliness and self-consciousness. There is an ultimate goal beckoning any hardy and rugged pilgrim onward: participation with the Immortals and the kind of happiness and transcendent joy echoed in the laughter of Mozart which infiltrates the book. But becoming one's self (realizing one's self, full actualization) or losing one's self, surrendering it, are equally painful. And yet, one can surmise, the writer regards the first as a dead-end, leading to isolation and unbearable loneliness; the latter leads to immortality; it is "the way to true manhood, the way to the immortals . . ." (page 62). In Gertrude Hesse in the person of his protagonist Kuhn had entertained and then rejected the suggestion of Lohe and of his father that he solve the self's problems by forgetting self, by surrendering himself to concern for others. Possibly the advice was felt to be too demanding for his age at the time and, in any case, it was too redolent for him of a pat formula from a catechism. In the Treatise of Steppenwolf there is a return to this advice with a decidedly Eastern and Hessean coloring. Speaking of suicidally-inclined men the writer says:

> . . . suicides present themselves as those who are overtaken by the sense of guilt inherent in individuals, those souls that find the aim of life not in the perfecting and molding of the self (welchen nicht mehr die Vollendung und Ausgestaltung ihrer selbst als Lebensziel erscheint. . . . GS, iv, 232), but in liberating themselves by going back to the mother, back to God, back to the all. Many of these natures are wholly incapable of ever having recourse to real suicide, because they have a profound consciousness of the sin of doing so. For us they are suicides nonetheless; for they see death and not life as the releaser. They are ready to cast themselves away in surrender, to be extinguished and to go back to the beginning (page 48). (Für uns sind sie dennoch Selbstmörder, denn sie sehen im Tod, nicht im Leben den Erlöser, sie sind bereit, sich wegzuwerfen and hinzugeben, auszulöschen und zum Anfang zurückzukehren, GS, iv, 233.)

This passage and another on pages 53-54 throw some light on larger questions. This latter passage contrasts the bourgeois and the outsider, the Steppenwolf, in terms of the latter's impulse toward complete self-surrender to some absolute such as we find in

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the saint or the profligate. In terms of this willingness to give up the self, to give the self to something other, profligate and saint are both superior in the writer's mind, obviously, to the well-balanced and convention-protected bourgeois. In the passage quoted above these "pilgrims of the absolute" are apparently equated most interestingly with those who have a deeper "death wish" than the more active, aggressive type whose ideal is the "perfecting and molding of the self" (page 48). The Steppenwolf liberates himself--liberates rather than perfects--"by going back to the mother, back to God, back to the all" (page 48). This is a most basic assumption in the thought of Steppenwolf: the Steppenwolf, this kind of man, is to realize his destiny, not by a *Demian*-like cultivation of the self through the exercise of the will's autonomy and creativity, but *by a surrender of the self to a host of experiences in order to achieve that dissolution of the self or, what seems equivalent to it, that identification of the self with all facets of reality, such a widening of the self as leads to its return to the All, a new and earned identity with all that is.*

To surrender the self, to let it be dissolved, is no simple matter of effortlessly dropping off into the lap of Mother Nature or into some resigned quiescence. It involves suffering, especially insofar as rarely if ever can the self be definitively and painlessly surrendered in one great act. What is required is renewed, constant dying to the self--"However often and however grievously this illusion (of the self as a unit) is shattered, it always mends again" (page 58). A glimpse of the terror of this way is enough to

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frighten a man like the Steppenwolf:

> He knows too well that it (this way) leads to still greater sufferings, to proscription, to the last renunciation, perhaps to the scaffold, and even though the enticement of immortality lies at the journey's end, he is still unwilling to suffer all these sufferings and to die all these deaths. Though the goal of manhood is better known to him than to the bourgeois, still he shuts his eyes. He is resolved to forget that the desperate clinging to the self and the desperate clinging to life are the surest way to eternal death, while the power to die, to strip one's self naked, and the eternal surrender of the self bring immortality with them (page 62).
>
> Er fühlt recht wohl: das führt zu noch größeren Leiden, zur Ächtung, zum letzten Verzicht vielleicht zum Schafott,-- und wenn auch am Ende dieses Weges Unsterblichkeit lockt, so ist er doch nicht gewillt, all diese Leiden zu leiden, alle diese Tode zu sterben. Obwohl ihm vom Ziel der Menschwerdung mehr bewußt ist als den Bürgern, macht er doch die Augen zu and will nicht wissen, daß das verzweifelte Hängen am Ich, das verzweifelte Nichsterbenwollen der sicherste Weg zum ewigen Tode ist, während Sterbenkönnen, Hüllenabstreifen, ewige Hingabe des Ichs an die Wandlung zur Unsterblichkeit führt (GS, iv, page 248).

But this is the truly awesome ideal that the writer of the Treatise, indeed that Hesse himself, understands and feels so deeply to be the answer as regards how one is to live, what one is to aim for. To recapitulate the Treatise's program for the perfect man, for participation with the Immortals, it will be good to repeat here once more the Treatise's broad outline of the path:

> The way to innocence, to the uncreated and to God leads on, not back, not back to the wolf or to the child, but ever further into sin, ever deeper into human life (sondern immer weiter in die Schuld, immer tiefer in die Menschwerdung hinein, GS, iv, 249). . . . Instead of narrowing your world and simplifying your soul, you will have to absorb more and more of the world and at last take all of it up in your painfully expanded soul, if you are ever to find peace. This is the road that Buddha and every great man has gone, whether consciously or not, insofar as fortune favored his quest. All births mean separation from the All, the confinement within limitation, the separation from God, the pangs of being born ever anew. The return into the All,

> the dissolution of painful individuation, the reunion with God means the expanison of the soul until it is able once more to embrace the All.(page 64).
> Jede Geburt bedeutet Trennung vom All, bedeutet Umgrenzung, Absonderung von Gott, leidvolle Neuwerdung. Rückkehr ins All, Aufhebung der leidvollen Individuation, Gottwerden bedeutet: seine Seele so erweitert haben, daß sie das All wieder zu umfassen vermag (GS, iv, page 250).

The Steppenwolf (man) must overcome the separateness, the limitation, he has fallen into through birth (severance from the All) by recognizing that his personal identity is essentially an illusion. This is aided by every effort he makes to merge himself with each facet of reality. Such a scattering of the self results in the self's reunion with that all from which it came. Openness to every human experience and all human potential widens the soul to the point where it shares the inclusiveness of the All, where it has transcended the particularity of individual personality. Mileck says: "That the ultimate stage of perfection envisaged by Hesse suspends the _principium individuationis_, is beyond question (Hesse's _Entwerden_)" (Mileck, page 167).

Analysis of the Narrative

The centrality of our theme to Hesse's work is such that any consideration of it is in constant danger of overflowing any limits and becoming all-inclusive. Once one understands the constancy and persistence of Hesse's quest there is the definite possibility that every single element in the novels can be linked to it. Nevertheless it must be said that such a total, all encompassing approach to the works cannot be taken here. In what follows, the narrative proper will be considered in terms of three themes largely drawn from the _Treatise_. These themes will facilitate an organization of the rampant riot of material that is the story.[45]

1) The illusion of the self must be broken down and the self expanded till it is once again coexstensive with the All and beyond all particularity;

2) Humor, music and Mozart (the Immortals) are agents in this self-dissolution and represent the final victory over life's inevitable disharmony;

3) Spirit and Nature are especially significant poles of tension in the life of the Steppenwolf. (This latter was not specifically treated in the discussion of the Treatise since it comes to light more through the general movement of the novel.)

Earlier the wolf of the Steppes, Harry Haller, was seen in his unnatural habitat, the bourgeois world. It remains to preface his course with a few more remarks on his personality and character. Harry Haller is in his late forties when first encountered, in, as he says, the "lukewarm days of a discontented middle-aged man" (page 26). He is an intellectual, a writer of sorts (like Hesse, berated for opposing his country's part in the War), a loner who sits in taverns over a glass of wine, cynical about his fellow intellectuals, out of sympathy with life's pleasures and aims, unable to read a paper or sit in a cinema house (page 30). Like Hesse he has been married and divorced from a wife who went insane. He currently has a girl-friend of sorts that he sees rarely and then only to fight and

[45] At the beginning of the story the narrator says of the Steppenwolf and his experiences:

> It was not in my power to verify the truth of the experiences related in Haller's manuscript. I have no doubt that they are for the most part fictitious, not, however, in the sense of arbitrary invention. They are rather the deeply lived spiritual events which he has attempted to express by giving them the form of tangible experiences. The partly fantastic occurrences in Haller's fiction come presumably from the later period of his stay here, and I have no doubt that even they have some basis in real occurence (pages 19,20).

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be further distressed. The nephew sees in him a profusion of gifts in disharmony, a victim of self-hate possibly induced by a rigid upbringing, again something suggestive of Hesse's own childhood and some of its Pietist influences (page 10). Like a true wolf he is marked by "shy loneliness," by "his savagery, his restlessness, his homesickness, his homelessness" (page 17). Out of touch with his age and world, halfway towards another age, he has no security in himself and no satisfaction in his manner of life (page 22). The man who wrote the Krisis poems is also the Steppenwolf. He is in a crisis, a crisis compounded of middle-age, loneliness and alienation from society's life.

As Mark Boulby has emphasized Steppenwolf is a hall of mirrors. Nearly everyone in it reflects some aspect of the Steppenwolf's thousand-sided personality or shows unsuspected aspects to him. First he is shown to us as he appears to the nephew; then follows Haller's own account of his wretched life; next the author of the Treatise expatiates on the traits of the Steppenwolf. Now, following the Treatise, the novel enters on a host of events of varying degrees of reality or on various levels in which again the Steppenwolf is reflected or exposed.

A portrait of the Steppenwolf in action follows some pages after the Treatise is closed. In an unguarded moment he has allowed himself to say yes to a dinner invitation at the home of an acquaintance he has chanced to meet near the library. Much as he immediately regrets it, he nevertheless goes to the home and very soon feels his regrets justified. A small portrait of Goethe, a work of "pretentious virtuosity," pains and exasperates him in the room he is received in (page 79). The couples' disagreement with the writing of an unpatriotic fellow named Harry Haller, referred to in a newspaper (again a reflection of Hesse's own relations with his fellow Germans), offers him further evidence of his utter incompatibility with these people. Very shortly he senses: "There was not a question they put to me that I could answer frankly" (page 81). After dinner, in the presence of the wife who treasures the picture of Goethe, he sharply attacks the painting as pretentious and misrepresentative. Later in the novel Haller will see in himself the same pseudo-nobility and false loftiness with which he faults this picture, an evidence of Hesse's appreciation of the psychological truth that men most abhor in others what they refuse to see in themselves (page 130). His remarks pretty well end the evening and as he leaves he hears the wolf within howling with glee (page 83). Once out of the house he restates to himself his impossible position in the world:

> I could not bear this tame, lying, well-mannered life any longer. And since it appeared that I could not bear my loneliness any longer either, since my own company had become so unspeakably hateful and nauseous, since I struggled for breath in a vacuum and suffocated in hell, what way out was left me? . . . Never had the clinging to mere life seemed so grievous as now (pages 83, 84).

And Haller is weary of making changes in his life, of trying, of beginning again. He refers the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation to successive phases in one life-time and is set to refuse any new reorganization of his life, any new incarnation (page 69). He wants release (moksha, nirvana) from further incarnations or, one might suspect, from the consequences of Romantic Irony, from constant *aspiration*. In Haller's thought there seems to be a rejection by Hesse of the way of *Demian*:

> It is true that every time my life was shattered in this way I had in the end gained something, some increase in liberty and in spiritual growth and depth, but with it went an increased loneliness, an increasing chill of severance and estrangement. Looked at with the bourgeois eye, my life had been a continuous descent from one shattering to the next that left me more remote at every step from all that was normal, permissible and healthful (page 68).

Release, he feels, must come through death, self-inflicted death.

But instead of release through death he is to find an added impetus for a new beginning. Ironically enough he is directed from a gravesite, to which he had come after mindlessly following a funeral procession, to go where he will find this impetus. He had mistaken one of the mourners for his placard-carrying acquaintance of past walks. Before receiving the copy of the *Treatise* from this man he had met him carrying a poster:

Anarchist Evening Entertainment
Magic Theatre
Entrance Not for Everybody (page 39)

In the cemetery he asks this man: "Is there no show tonight?" "Go to the Black Eagle, man, if that's what you want," is the response (page 74). Later Haller does wander into the Black Eagle, a dance hall, and there he meets Hermine, one of the girls.

Some simplicity and order in what follows so hectically are necessary. This can be achieved if (1) Hermine and her friends Pablo and Maria are taken as guides in Harry's education in self-surrender and (2) Mozart as his teacher in the uses of music and humor. Following these two points will be a consideration (3) of *Geist*

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or Natur.

1) Self-surrender

Hermine

The Steppenwolf's situation, out of joint with his times, society and self, indicates what Tillich earlier termed a consequence of romanticism. As a creature of Hesse's Haller may easily share some of this and he shows a readiness too like some of the romantics in like straits to turn to and accept a guiding hand, for Haller quickly agrees to obey the girl he has met in the Black Eagle. "Obeying is like eating and drinking. There's nothing like it if you've been without it too long. Isn't it so, you're glad to do as I tell you?" Haller: "Very glad. You know everything" (pages 86-87).

With this initial surrender to the girl, who only later reveals herself as Hermine, Haller begins a relationship that persists till the end of the story. Harry Haller has the same initials as Hermann Hesse and Hermine is the feminine form of Hesse's first name. The wolf-man has obvious similarities to Hesse and Hermine undoubtedly expresses a more repressed side of both Haller and Hesse. Much of what follows in this last and major part of the book is an effort to bring to consciousness and expression the ignored or repressed aspects of Harry Haller. One phrase in particular is suggestive of Harry's relation to Hermine, though not exhausting it: he needs her to live; she needs him to die.

Hermine is a call girl, a dance-hall girl, of some sensitivity and reflectiveness. With uncanny wisdom and gentle mockery she recognizes Harry's state at their first meeting. She knows he wishes

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to kill himself and is, therefore, afraid to go home; she understands his abhorrence of the Goethe picture. Accurately she diagnoses him as the victim of a lopsided education, a stiff personality with some professorial pomposity and a not-totally justified self-pity. After he complains that living is hard she suggests dancing as a remedy and solace (page 87). When he answers that he cannot dance and blames his parents (Pietism?) she says:

> So you can't dance? Not at all? Not even a one step? And yet you talk of the trouble you've taken to live? You told a fib there, my boy, and you shouldn't do that at your age. How can you say that you've taken any trouble to live when you won't even dance (pages 87, 88)?
>
> . . . .
>
> Perhaps you've even got your doctor's degree and know Chinese or Spanish. Am I right? Very well then. But you couldn't find the time and money for a few dancing lessons! No, indeed (page 88)!
>
> . . . .
>
> Fine views of life, you have. You have always done the difficult and complicated things and the simple ones you haven't even learned. No time, of course. More amusing things to do. Well, thank God, I'm not your mother. But to do as you do and then say you've tested life to the bottom and found nothing in it is going a bit too far (page 88).
>
> . . . .
>
> Oh, don't make a song of your sufferings. You are no madman, Professor. You're not half mad enough to please me. It seems to me you're much too clever in a silly way, just like a professor. Have another roll . . . (page 89).

With very little resistance Haller soon recognizes Hermine as an incarnate grace:

> She was my release and my way to freedom. She had to teach me to live or teach me to die. She had to touch my deadened heart with her firm and pretty hand, and at the touch of life it would either leap again to flame or subside in ashes. I could not imagine whence she derived these powers,

> what the source of her magic was, in what secret soil this deep meaning she had for me had grown up; nor did it matter. I did not care to know. There was no longer the least importance for me in any knowledge or perception I might have. Indeed it was just in that line that I was overstocked. . . . What I longed for in my despair was life and resolution, action and reaction, impulse and impetus (pages 104, 105).

At the risk of a further reduction and simplification of Hesse's thought, it will help to sum up Hermine's function in Harry's life in terms of her teaching him self-surrender through *dance* and the *play of sex*.

Haller's claim that his *Weltanschauung* is due to having tested life's depths and emptiness (above) is to Hermine certainly an exaggeration for one who has not taken the effort required to learn to dance. Her teaching is confirmed for him later when one of his fantasies shows him Goethe himself doing a few dance steps:

> While he flickered to and fro with his dance steps and figures, it was borne in upon me that he at least had not neglected learning to dance (page 97).

Dancing epitomizes the naturalness and grace, the spontaneity and ease that Haller's education has made so little provision for. Hermine tells him:

> It seems to me you've still to learn all the things that come naturally to other people (Ich glaube, du mußt alles erst lernen, was sich bei andern Menschen von selber versteht . . . GS, iv, page 301.), even the pleasure of eating. So look, my boy, I must tell you that this is the celebration of the duck, and when you pick the tender flesh from the bone it's a festal occasion and you must be just as eager and glad at heart and delighted as a lover when he unhooks his lady love for the first time (page 111).

Our hero is so conditioned by man-made custom and the intellectual aspect of life that other equally human aspects are stunted, can only be actualized through a paradoxical *effort* although really they should

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flow from the experience of living. Here Hesse echoes a common complaint against civilization's artificiality and the constriction of its products. What Hermine will attempt to do for the Steppenwolf is termed, of course, teaching him to live but it is also an attempt at emancipating him, wolf-man though he is, from the encumbrances of the despised society on whose fringes he lurks. One should not need society's implicit permission to act with some spontaneity. ". . . . it's a poor fellow who can't take his pleasure without asking other people's permission" (page 112).

Understanding or intuiting what Hermine means to teach him is easier than carrying out her lessons in practice. One can well imagine the lone artist-writer in his Swiss retreat realizing the rarefied nature of much of his own existence with its quest for self-understanding and realization in the ancient books of China and India. Whether Hesse himself ever shared much of the sort of education Haller is about to receive, both are able to appreciate it:

> Yet though she played at being a child she had seen through me completely, and though she made me her pupil there and then in the game of living for each fleeting moment, she seemed to know more of life than is known to the wisest of the wise. It might be the highest wisdom or the merest artlessness. It is certain in any case that life is quite disarmed by the gift to live so entirely in the present. . . . (page 112).

Like the obedience in much of Christian tradition Harry's obedience to Hermine leads him to humiliation as a preliminary to freedom and release. Probably the nadir of this is reached for the awkward, self-tormented, dignity-burdened intellectual when he is taken by Hermine to buy a gramophone. With this they are able to practice dancing in his room.

> Hermine turned on a fox trot and, after showing me the first steps, began to take me in hand. I trotted obediently around with her, colliding with chairs, hearing her directions and failing to understand them, treading on her toes, and being as clumsy as I was conscientious (page 119).

The surrender, the letting himself go required by dancing comes hard to the Steppenwolf: ". . . one had to bring certain qualities to dancing that I was entirely without, gaiety, innocence, frivolity, elasticity" (page 120). Gradually it does come more easily till he is able to say, "I forgot for the moment all the rules I had conscientiously learned and simply floated along" (page 122).

The dancing typifies what Hermine represents or can demonstrate to Harry: sponaneous surrender to something or someone outside one's self. But finally one is left with some ambiguity about the success of the endeavor.

Haller's self-forgetfulness through dancing is occasional, sporadic; can he, could he, ever actually totally "abandon himself?" About all the things she endeavors to teach him he must say: "And yet I could not respond to all this with warmth and freedom. I could not entirely forget myself in abandon" (page 125). At the fancy dress ball he will experience momentarily, at least, something of the goal of Hermine's instruction:

> An experience fell to my lot this night of the Ball that I had never known in all my fifty years, though it is known to every flapper and student--the intoxication of a general festivity, the mysterious merging of the personality in the mass, the mystic union of joy. (das Erlebnis des Festes, der Rausch der Festgemeinschaft, das Geheimnis vom Untergang der Person in der Menge, von der Unio mystica der Freude, GS, iv, pages 361, 362). . . . A hundred times in my life I had seen examples of those whom rapture had intoxicated and released from the self. . . . My personality was dissolved in the intoxication of the festivity like salt in water (pages 168, 169). (Ich war nicht mehr ich, meine Persönlichkeit

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> war aufgelöst im Festrausch wie Salz im Wasser, GS, iv, page 362).

Further on:

> Ah, thought I, meanwhile, let come to me what may, for once at least, I, too, have been happy, radiant, released from myself, a brother of Pablo's, a child (page 170).
>
> Ach, dachte ich zwischenein, mag mit mir geschehen, was da wolle, einmal bin doch auch ich glücklich gewesen, strahlend, meiner selbst entbunden, ein Bruder Pablos ein Kind (GS, iv, page 363)(Italics mine).

This heretofore undeveloped or unrealized aspect of himself represents one of the thousand selves of which the Treatise had spoken and which Haller sees as one of his possibilities. It also serves to break down the rigid and limited self he had built up. Why should he merely be what his individuation seems to have made him or limited him to being? Why not realize there is more and allow it to blossom?

> The Steppenwolf treatise, and Hermine too, were right in their doctrine of the thousand souls. Every day new souls kept springing up beside the host of old ones, making clamorous demands and creating confusion; and now I saw as clearly as in a picture what an illusion my former personality had been. The few capacities and pursuits in which I had happened to be strong had occupied all my attention, and I had painted a picture of myself as a person who was in fact nothing more than a most refined and educated specialist in poetry, music and philosophy; and as such I had lived, leaving all the rest of me to be a chaos of potential ties, instincts and impulses which I found an encumbrance and gave the label of Steppenwolf (pages 128-129).

Harry Haller had been an educated specialist and had consigned all his other possibilities to a limbo called the wolf part of himself, something to be ignored as an embarrassing remnant from an evolutionary phase long since transcended. Under Hermine's tutelage he at least glimpses the possibility of other Harrys utilizing these forces and accepts their likely legitimacy.

Hermine, in ways reminiscent of Demian, works at Harry's re-education and de-personalization, the emptying out of what he has been. She does this with the help of two friends from her world: Maria, a girl-friend in the same occupation and Pablo, a notably handsome saxophonist of Spanish or Latin American blood. Pablo will later initiate the inevitable male-to-male kiss in this novel.

Once Harry meets Maria in the dance hall Hermine detects his attraction to her and urges him to follow it up. She knows of Harry's girl friend whom he meets occasionally for a quarrel and argues that such an attachment is no barrier to other loves:

> Of course, it's very charming of you to wish to be true to this estimable friend of yours, but you must permit me not to take it so very seriously. I suspect you of taking love frightfully seriously. That is your own affair. . . . All I have to worry about is that you should learn to know a little more of the little arts and the lighter sides of life. . . . It's high time you slept with a pretty girl again, Steppenwolf (page 127).

Even love can be taken too seriously according to Hermine's ethic--if ethic is not too ponderous and pompous a word.

A few days after his first dancing experience--largely with Maria--Harry enters his room after an organ concert only to find Maria lying on the bed (page 134). She is left there for a long parenthesis about the concert and the relation of German intellectuals to music. Maria, when the writer returns to her after several pages, is experienced by Harry while he makes love to her as the "worthy fulfillment" of the music he had heard: Buxtehude, Pachelbel, Bach and Haydn (page 137).

From Hermine and Maria the wolf from the steppes learns to view the world of pleasure and sex less morally, more for itself as innocent, good, to be enjoyed.

> During that wonderful first night and the days that followed Maria taught me much. She taught me the charming play and delights of the senses, but she gave me, also, new understanding, new insight, new love. The world of the dance and pleasure resorts, the cinemas, bars and hotel lounges that for me, the hermit and esthete, had always about it something trivial, forbidden, and degrading, was for Maria and Hermine and their companions the world pure and simple (page 138).

He is taught an appreciation for the life of the senses which is indeed alien to much of what is termed Western culture; when present it is usually as a foil for the higher and more spiritual things. The typical Western intellectual, Haller or Hesse, had to learn to be at home in something so natural and human as the life of the senses. Through the easy instrumentality of Hermine, Maria and Pablo, the life of the senses, for Haller is returned to its freedom from guilt:

> I had learned from her (Maria), once more before the end, to confide myself like a child to life's surface play, to pursue a fleeting joy, and to be both child and beast in the innocence of sex, a state that (in earlier life) I had only known rarely and as an exception. The life of the senses (Sinnenleben) and of sex had nearly always had for me the bitter accompaniment of guilt, the sweet but dread taste of forbidden fruit that puts a spiritual man (ein geistiger Mensch, GS, iv, page 350) on his guard. Now Hermine and Maria had shown me this garden in its innocence, and I had been a guest there and thankfully (page 157).

But he is to go further along this same route with the additional help of Pablo.

Current language would certainly term the Latin saxophonist a sex-symbol. That he was good-looking in face and figure the

Steppenwolf did not deny but as a Puritan he must add: "I could not discover what further advantages he had" (page 123). This "beautiful demigod of love" who is also a specialist in the use of drugs is destined to be one of Hermine's assistants in furthering Harry's personal disintegration and, hence, salvation (pages 124, 131). Maria is extremely fond of Pablo. Pablo, Maria and Harry are in Pablo's hotel room when the suggestion is made:

> He (Pablo) gave us a drink from three little bottles, a mysterious and wonderful draught. And then when I had got into a very good humor, he proposed, with beaming eyes, to celebrate a love orgy for three. I declined abruptly. Such a thing was inconceivable to me (pages 144, 145).

Pablo says: "Harry is too morally minded. Nothing to be done. . . ." (page 145). A few moments later, lying down to rest, Harry accepts Pablo's kiss on his eyelids "as though I thought it came from Maria, but I knew very well it came from him" (page 145). Echoes of this suggestion occur later when Hermine attracts Harry's love while herself dressed as an old schoolmate of his named Hermann (page 166). And Harry too fondly recalls the days when sexual distinction made no difference in love: "those years of childhood when the capacity for love, in its first youth, embraces not only both sexes, but all and everything, sensuous and spiritual. . . ." (pages 166, 167).

In earlier works love of a homosexual nature or at least love between friends of the same sex has been noted. In Steppenwolf this appears with more justification or sanction from the writer and as one example of the way in which a personality could be widened and realized along a variety of paths. It may be said that in the novels considered in this dissertation there is at least a tendency, at most an effort, to blur the sexual distinction somewhat, to see love as love whether between persons of the same or opposite sex. Homosexuality or lesbianism are presented less as aberrations than as evidences of the diversity of human love (page 167).

Harry's personality expansion includes not only diversity in love but also a great deal more experience in heterosexual love. In Pablo's Magic Theatre he enters one door labeled "All Girls Are Yours" (page 197). This section enables Hesse, as he writes of Harry's recall of the fragrance of springtime and youth, to exercise his romantic heritage and imagination to the fullest. Once again, as in youth, Haller says: "leaped in me the flame of love, the hunger of sex, the fever and the foreboding of desire" (page 197). Our tormented hero is here enabled to broaden himself and to realize more of his potential by reliving his youth only this time with more decisiveness in grasping its opportunities, less hesitancy, less willingness to leave any flower unplucked. The times when he had blushingly stood aside in awe afraid to express his love are all brought back and he boldly reverses the temerity and timidity of the past:

> And this time instead of standing ceremoniously cap in hand till she (Rosa) had gone by, I did, in spite of anguish bordering on obsession, what my blood bade me do. I cried: 'Rosa! Than God, you've come, you beautiful, beautiful girl. I love you so dearly.' . . . Rosa did not put on her grown-up air, and she did not go on. She stopped and looked at me and, growing even redder than before, she said: 'Heaven be praised, Harry--do you really like me?' Her brown eyes lit up her strong face, and they showed me that my past life and loves had all been false and perplexed and full of stupid unhappiness from that very moment on a Sunday afternoon when I had let Rosa pass me by. Now, however, the blunder was put

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> right. Everything went differently and everything was good. (page 199).

And so on with Rosa, Irmgard, Ida, Emma, etc.

All the loving Harrys of the past who had been stifled by inhibition and fear are released and re-lived--again, realizing the many selves, the many Harrys that might have been.

> Wishes, dreams and possibilities that had once no other life than my own imagination were lived now in reality. . . .
>
> I was now, as I perceived, that good-looking and ardent boy whom I had seen making so eagerly for love's door. I was living a bit of myself only--a bit that in my actual life and being had not been expressed to a tenth or a thousandth part, and I was living it to the full. I was watching it grow unmolested by any other part of me. It was not perturbed by the thinker, nor tortured bythe Steppenwolf, nor dwarfed by the poet, the visionary or the moralist (page 201).

Pablo's earlier suggestion is eventually taken up:

> Even that seduction to which Pablo had once invited me came again, and other, earlier ones which I had not fully grasped at the time, fantastic games for three or four, caught me up in their dance with a smile (pages 202, 203).

The unfolding of the possibilities, mostly missed possibilities of love and life, through the agency of these new friends, gives the Steppenwolf some idea of the thousands of souls, of selves, residing in him but locked in by custom and narrow self-definition:

> New, indirect and complicated relations rose before me, new possibilities in love and life; and I thought of the thousand souls of the Steppenwolf treatise (page 147).

Pablo and his Magic Theatre have yet more to say to and show to the Steppenwolf on the whole matter of self-disintegration, the paradoxical road to self-realization, to the realization of one's identity with the All.

Pablo's part in Harry's education is assisted by various drugs and draughts which he always has available. After drinking with Pablo and Maria and sharing one of Pablo's mysterious cigarettes Harry has dreams or fantasies. Pablo's warm voice sounds from far off as he leads Harry to the Magic Theatre and its various doors (page 174). Pablo says to Harry:

> I can give you nothing that has not already its being within yourself. I can throw open to you no picture gallery but your own soul. All I can give you is the opportunity, the impulse, the key. I can help you to make your own world visible. That is all (page 175).

And, in the various scenes that follow upon Harry's opening different doors there is a bringing to light of Harry's more hidden self, his repressed self. Doors are apt, almost obvious, symbols for new self-perception. Before the Steppenwolf can benefit from this symbolic and magic theatre he must--symbolic of a constant task--renounce the narrow, blinding self he has been pleased to call his personality, the narrow self of a Steppenwolf (page 176). His desire for death has really been the desire for release from the suffocating restriction of this narrowly-defined personality:

> That is the prison where you lie. And if you were to enter the theater as you are, you would see everything through the eyes of Harry and the old spectacles of the Steppenwolf. You are therefore requested to lay these spectacles aside and to be so kind as to leave your highly esteemed personality here in the cloakroom where you will find it again when you wish (page 176).

With Mozart and the Immortals Pablo is concerned to teach Harry to laugh--especially at himself. He holds up the looking-glass to Harry mirroring the absurd Steppenwolf image and has Harry look into it until he is able to shatter it with a laugh. As always in Hesse, such an event is provisional as Romantic Irony would require; this

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suicide is "not a final one" (page 178).

In the Magic Theatre Harry is faced with an array of doors each with provocative inscriptions. Generally the doors as their inscriptions suggest are concerned with some facet of Harry's inner unveiling or personal disintegration. The doorway through which Harry first enters is, of all, the nearest to being an exception to this description. It is entitled:

Jolly Hunting
Great Hunt in Automobiles (page 180)

Like the section on the German intellectual and music this reflects a broader concern than that of the individual's fate and realization. It might be noted, however, even if it is not treated here in detail, that this vignette is important in explaining possibly some of Hesse's appeal to the present American generation, especially in anticipating some of their paramount concerns.[46]

[46] Without going into the story of this episode, a number of sentences can be taken from it which, even out of their context, are clear enough indications of Hesse's foresight in envisioning a war between man and the machine and the ecological, political and concerns of today's youth:

> Set factories afire at last! Make a little room on the crippled earth! Depopulate it so that the grass may grow again, and woods, meadows, heather, stream and moor return to this world of dust and concrete (page 180).
>
> There was a war on. . . ; but a war in which every one who lacked air to breathe and no longer found life exactly pleasing gave emphatic expression to his displeasure and strove to prepare the way for a general destruction of this ironcast civilization of ours (page 181).
>
> We are of the opinion that whatever speed a motorcar travels is too great. We are destroying all cars and all other machines also (page 184).

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Countless other doors entice Harry by their inscriptions, many of them examples of succinct irony; e.g.:

Delightful Suicide
You Laugh Yourself to Bits

Do You Want to be All Spirit?
The Wisdom of the East

Solitude Made Easy
Complete Substitute for All Forms
of Sociability (pages 190, 191)

Finally he chooses to enter the door labeled

Guidance in the Building Up of the Personality
Success Guaranteed (page 191)

A Pablo-like character sits Eastern fashion on the floor with something like a chessboard before him. Asked if he is Pablo the man replies: "I am not anybody. . . . We have no names here. . ." (page 191). The implication seems to be that names insofar as they imply *one* defined constellation of powers are unconcionable tributes to a highly overrated concept, personality. The player requests pieces from Steppenwolf's personality in order to show him the game. In a mirror

---

You know, of course, that this part of the world was shockingly overpopulated. Well, now we are going to let in a little air (page 185).

. . . there are indeed too many men in the world. In earlier days it wasn't so noticeable. But now that everyone wants air to breathe, and a car to drive as well, one does notice it. . . . In time, mankind will learn to keep its numbers in check by rational means (page 188).

It is not a good thing when man overstrains his reason and tries to reduce to rational order matters that are not susceptible of rational treatment. Then there arise ideals such as those of the Americans or of the Bolsheviks. Both are extraordinarily rational, and both lead to a frightful oppression and impoverishment of life, because they simplify it so crudely. The likeness of man, once a high ideal, is in process of becoming a machine-made article (page 188).

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Harry again sees his personality broken down into constituent parts and gives them to the player who arranges and rearranges them in new relationships explaining what is meant:

> The mistaken and unhappy notion that man is an enduring unity is known to you. It is also known to you that man consists of a multitude of souls, of numerous selves. The separation of the unity of the personality into these numerous pieces passes for madness. Science had invented the name schizomania for it. . . . It (science) is wrong insofar as it holds that one only and binding and lifelong order is possible for the multiplicity of subordinate selves. . . . We demonstrate to anyone whose soul has fallen to pieces that he can rearrange these pieces of a previous self in what order he pleases, and so attain to an endless multiplicity of moves in the game of live. . . .
>
> This is the art of life. . . . (pages 192, 193).

To sum up: 1) Man is not to be pigeon-holed and "understood" in terms of preconceived categories; he eludes that; 2) he is capable of unheard of configurations for his possibilities are endless; 3) there is no single identity or unity in a man which is absolute or final. Again, one can sense a transferral of the Asian doctrine of reincarnation from its original exemplification in a series of separate existences to a series of different types of life within one human life and one human lifetime.

The next inscription to draw Harry Haller is:

Marvelous Taming of the Steppenwolf (page 194)

This opens the door to a wild and savage episode in which, first, an animal-tamer, the human element in the Steppenwolf's dichotomy, tames the animal into subservience. Following this things are reversed and the animal reduces the man to cringing subservience. All this is an ironic rejection, once again, of the now very familiar wolf-man schema.

The work of Hermine, Maria and Pablo in widening Harry's personality, in showing him the possibilities in that part of him he had regretted as animal and expendable, has been considered. It is a vindication of the life of the senses, passion, instinct and feeling. Music and humor have a part to play and Harry's guide or mentor here is primarily Mozart, one of the Immortals. The three friends have worked to immerse Harry in the life of ordinary men, the life of the senses, of love and sex. Mozart will suggest other avenues to self-disintegration, to overcoming the pain and limitations of single personality.

2) Music and Humor

Mozart

When one turns from the analysis of Harry and his relation to Hermine, Maria and Pablo to that of his relation to the Immortals, Mozart, music and humor, the whole atmosphere changes from one of passion, warmth, sensuality to an oft-remarked coolness, an icy brittleness which is not, however, meant to be any the less worthy of attention for this lack of human qualities. And too, it must be borne in mind that the division between the two types of experience is not absolute. Music, for example, is obviously not for a German romantic something essentially icy and rarefied, though Hesse does give his accolade to the more classical composers.

The meaning of humor and its function is not as thoroughly developed as the idea of the dissolution of the self but the two ideas are related. In the scenes where Harry is urged to look into the mirror and laugh until it breaks into pieces there is a fulfillment

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of the inscription over one of the doors of the Magic Theater:

> Delightful Suicide
> You laugh Yourself to Bits (page 190)

Surely this is one of humor's highest functions; to enable man to see life and himself in the relative terms they deserve, to transcend the temptation of making the present, this self, this world, this pain absolute. Hermine, Goethe and Mozart all rebuke Haller's overseriousness about himself and life. Humor is not only a means to self-dissolution, but also itself a stance from which life and reality can be properly evaluated.

When Harry, depressed by his evening with the old acquaintance and the Goethe portrait, comes to the Black Eagle, Hermine belittles the whole incident. Instead of laughing off the dreadful picture, he wants to run home to hang himself (page 91). Hesse is certainly not denying real tragedy but only arguing through Hermine that not everything is material for epic tragedy. Later when Harry is carried away and begins a verbal apotheosis of Mozart's Don Giovanni Mozart himself tries to dampen his effusiveness and seriousness:

> Don't overstrain yourself. . . . (page 205).

Humor and Romantic Irony

Humor in Steppenwolf is best seen in its full importance if taken as a function of or as the expression of Romantic Irony. Romantic Irony resists any absolutizing of individual events, persons, things. Above all humor can assist in the context of this book in taking the "sacred" personality a little less seriously--in enabling Harry Haller to let himself go, be changed and amended, finally dissolved. Part,--indeed a great part--of his difficulty, is that he takes everything so seriously: his own self, his dual personality, his unharmonious relations with others, art and culture. What humor and Romantic Irony suggest in Steppenwolf is close to the medieval notion of viewing everything sub specie aeternitatis. Still, the more Protestant concern not to absolutize any finite reality (Tillich) is really more appropriate to Hesse's own background and religious tradition. Humor and its expositors or practitioners aim in their own way to loosen Harry's attachment to his own personality and all that he, as a typical cultured European, regards as sacred and indispensable. In a parenthesis humor is called "perhaps the most inborn and brilliant achievement of the spirit" (page 55). Humor, along with the Immortals and music seem to constitute the only permissible absolutes in Steppenwolf's world.

In his dream of Goethe, in whose defense Harry was ready to destroy his minimal social life, that worthy author refuses to give Harry much serious attention. Instead Goethe sportively dances around and avoids directly answering the intellectual's questions. He rebukes Harry for taking him, Goethe, too seriously. The Immortals have learned the relativity of their worth, and Goethe gives Harry a short sermon:

> We immortals do not like things to be taken seriously. We like joking. Seriousness, young man, is an accident of time. It consists, I don't mind telling you in confidence, in putting too high a value on time. I, too, once put too high a value on time. For that reason I wished to be a hundred years old. In eternity, however, there is no time, you see. Eternity is a mere moment just long enough for a joke (page 97).

"Seriousness . . . is an accident of time." The author here is reaching for a sublime yet light approach to the admitted sadness of human life. An important point which has not been emphasized thus far is the conviction running through Steppenwolf's essential optimism that life has been vitiated from the beginning, that there is no innocence (page 63); that we are all guilty (pages 63, 64, 306); that "life and reality are wrong" (page 150); that life is a riddle and seemingly hopeless (page 95). The Immortals teach that events and happenings of life, no matter how miserable, are relative. The disconcerting moments of life receive their power to annoy and depress from the value given to the present moment, to time. To look at all this with some sense of humor is to anticipate here and now the Immortals' evaluation of reality; it is the beginning of a solution. Hesse's probing mind is here really tackling the eternal problem of pain and evil.

Harry recalls the words of Goethe after Hermine has taught him dancing. Dancing, for all its apparent levity, is really an affirmation of this sense of the relativity of time and all time-contained elements. Instead of stumbling and plodding through the dross of reality, dancing is an anticipation of the lightness and long-range view and attitude of the Immortals. Hermine has also unfolded to Harry her vision of eternity, the real "home," where Goethe, Novalis, Mozart and her favorites, Saints Christopher and Philip Neri, all shine (page 153).

> The sacred sense of beyond, of timelessness, of a world which had an eternal value and the substance of which was divine had been given back to me today by this friend of

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> mine who taught me dancing (page 154).
>
> And eternity was nothing else than the redemption of time, its return to innocence, so to speak, and its transformation again into space (page 154).

Time which gives so many things their seriousness, is really an alien element compromising and soiling all we do and are. Humor, by helping man transcend the seriousness time induces, helps return life to innocence. It returns a disinterestedness to events and life. Tears and passion about life, persons, events, are commendably tragic but only serve to bind a man to time and other relativities. Laughter and humor free him, as they did Mozart, to float or dance off into space.

The relativity to be overcome or given up above all is the self, this, my personality. As Pablo explains to Harry, "Now, true humor begins when a man ceases to take himself seriously" (page 177).[47] By this definition the Steppenwolf is utterly bereft of a sense of humor. This continues to the very end, e.g., after killing Hermine, he begs for some atoning work. At this point Mozart diagnoses Harry well:

> Of course! When it's a question of anything stupid and pathetic and devoid of humor or wit, you're the man, you tragedian. Well, I am not. I don't care a fig for all your romantics of atonement. You wanted to be executed and to have your head chopped off, you lunatic! For this imbecile ideal you would suffer death ten times over. You are willing to die, you coward, but not to live (page 216).

That this should be said within the last two pages of the story well

[47] It might be noted that Pablo seems to lapse here and elsewhere into quasi-philosophical speech rather out of character with the empty-headed and inarticulate hedonist presented earlier.

illustrates the difficulty Harry Haller has in letting go of his precious self, of learning any lightness of touch regarding life. He is constantly scandalized and shocked by the grating of the ideal (presumably, his concern) against the realities he finds hard to accept. He is ready, he thinks, to die for the sublime, the ideal, but unwilling to live with the ideal as it is mediated imperfectly through the obtuse machinery of earth.

When Mozart turns on the radio and "violates" Handel by allowing his music to come over its waves and through its coarse machinery Harry is astonished:

> 'My God,' I cried in horror, 'what are you doing, Mozart? Do you really mean to inflict this mess on me and yourself, this triumph of our day, the last victorious weapon in the war of extermination against art? Must this be, Mozart' (page 212)?

Mozart's graphic lesson for him in this is that crude, crass reality cannot totally destroy the sublimity of the divine and the beautiful and that one must learn to laugh at the discrepancy rather than weep. As long as the Steppenwolf takes his own ideals and artistic criteria so seriously he cannot do this.

> . . . And now you hear not only a Handel who, disfigured by radio, is, all the same, in this most ghastly of disguises still divine; you hear as well and you observe, most worthy sir, a most admirable symbol of all life. When you listen to radio you are a witness of the everlasting war between idea and appearance, between time and eternity, between the human and the divine.(page 213).

Life and reality, Mozart goes on to say, are like the radio; they obtrude their mechanism and "dreary exigencies" between the ideal and the real.

> All life is so, my child, and we must let it be so; and, if we are not asses, laugh at it. It little becomes people

> like you to be critics of radio or of life either. Better learn to listen first! Learn what is to be taken seriously and laugh at the rest. . . . (page 213).

There is an echo of the Siddharthan solution in the admonition to listen to life but an advance on that position in the requirement that one discriminate between what is to be taken seriously and what is to be laughed at. Siddhartha attempted a more totally catholic and all-embracing attitude toward life, perhaps an excessively accepting attitude. In Steppenwolf the reality of evil, suffering, pain, possibly just the agony of middle-age, drive the writer to question rather than accept the existence of the less than ideal. It has become more difficult just to accept it. It is too excruciating to be smilingly petted and accepted; it must be laughed at in what will be termed "gallows humor."

Gallows Humor

It is Mozart who tells Harry, "Humor is always gallows-humor . . . ." (page 214). The necessity for humor is found in the inevitable confrontation with imperfection, suffering, misery and death. It has been noted above that there is a clear awareness in the novel of the allienated state of man, the flawed character of all things human. Men become sad, Hermine says, when they see "how it all is with life and everything. . . ." (page 114). The Treatise understood that only a few of mankind's heroes are ready to face isolation and tragedy, to live it out without flinching. But, and this seems the more important concern of Hesse, ordinary men need humor to face life's tragedy. Humor does not deny the tragedy but tries to accept it with minimal concentration on self. To bear tragedy is noble but impossible for most men. Humor enables them to share in the lofty detachment of the Immortals towards imperfection and evil. With it they at least glimpse the higher unity of eternity which dissolves the pain of life. Humor fulfills one of Hesse's implicit and most consistent desires: to look at life and reality in some other way than a purely ethical or moral way. It is really an aspect of an aesthetic view of life, life viewed from the point of view of some internal consonance and harmony.

"Life is always frightful," Mozart affirms (page 206). To be able to laugh off some of its imperfection and one's own is, if not the radical cure, at least provisionally helpful and, indeed, necessary. This aspect or function of humor seems of more general import than humor as Romantic Irony. The former aspect is more directly concerned with the problem of Harry Haller, letting go, forgetting the self; the second aspect is more in the nature of a Hessean response to the problem of moral and physical evil.

The Icy Coolness of the Immortals

The contrast between the warmth and passion of the world of Hermine and the icy coolness of the world of the Immortals was alluded to earlier. This is no absolute contrast: both the Immortals and the Mortals try to teach Harry humor; both try to teach him detachment. Obviously Harry feels himself somewhat out of his element in the life of Hermine and her friends and, probably mistakenly, thinks himself more at one with the Immortals, at least because of his concern for art and culture which he thinks they share. A poem of Harry's makes a sharp distinction between the world of ordinary human concerns and that of the Immortals. More than a mere reflection on Hermine over against Mozart it is rather evidence of the ideals and dichotomized view of things that Harry himself has. But the poem introduces well the world of the Immortals and in particular one important aspect of that world. The first sixteen lines describe a not only warm but sweltering, perspiring, fetid, raw world of passion, prayer, preying and pleasure. The last fourteen lines isolate the ethereal atmosphere of icy coolness and brittle laughter of the Immortals above time and space, above good and evil, above desire and hatred. It expresses the Hessean ideal of a realm or situation beyond present distinctions where an overarching unity is restored. The first part, selections:

> Ever reeking from the vales of earth
> Ascends to us life's fevered surge,
> Wealth's excess, the rage of dearth,
> Smoke of death meals on the gallow's verge;
> Greed without end, imprisoned air;
> Murderers' hands, usurers' hand, hands of prayer;
> Exhales in foetid breath the human swarm
> Whipped on by fear and lust, blood raw, blood warm,
> . . . .

The final section:

> But we above you ever more residing
> In the ether's star translumined ice
> Know not day nor night nor time's dividing,
> Wear nor age nor sex for our device.
> All your sins and anguish self-affrighting,
> Your murders and lascivious delighting
> Are to us but as a show. . .
> . . . .
> Cool and unchanging is our eternal being,
> Cool and star bright is our eternal laughter. (pages 155, 156)

The ideal, expressed in the poem and elsewhere articulated by the Immortals themselves, is a change from the solution of Siddhartha. In that novel Hesse (in the person of his hero) concluded with an ideal of Taoist sympathy and at-one-ness with all nature, all of mankind, all its feelings and aspirations. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that Harry Haller's teachers in the major part of the present book are trying to teach him how to expand his narrow personality to embrace and become identical with the concern and potential of all mankind. What we have in the poem is more specifically the ideal of the intractable Steppenwolf. The ideal, the world or sphere to which he aspires, seems to be beyond all this human concern, to be freed from the fever and anguish of ordinary life. It is more nearly the ideal of the Hindu sages and Platonist philosophers especially in its emphasis on "unchanging, eternal benig" (page 156). The ideal presented in the poem is more Apollonian than Dionysian and this is confirmed too by Haller's strictures on all music "less" than Mozart:

> Oh yes, Beethoven--he is wonderful too. But all that--beautiful as it may be--has something rhapsodical about it, something of disintegration (page 205).

Music, before all else, is the door to this trans-moral world. Very early in the story Haller recalls his reaction to a concert of "lovely, old music:"

> After two or three notes of the piano the door was opened of a sudden to the other world. I sped through heaven and saw God at work. . . . I accepted all things and to all things I gave up my heart. . . . (pages 29, 30).

The same intuition of this other world may come from a poet or philosopher but always it is besmirched by earthly dust, something, it has been noted, Mozart tells Haller he must learn to accept. The great composer, a divine genius dying in poverty at a very early age, epitomized in his music much--even all--that the Steppenwolf regards as ideal:

> (Goethe speaking) The Magic Flute presents life to us as a wondrous song. It honors our feelings, transient, as they are, as something eternal and divine. . . . It preaches optimism and faith (page 96).

And Haller himself thinks:

> Mozart, I thought and with the word conjured up the most beloved and the most exalted picture that my inner life contained (page 204).

The supra-human harmony and coolness that is Haller's ideal finds its more perfect expression only in music. The mystique of music celebrated by the German romantics and intellectuals fares less well elsewhere in the book.

The components of this ideal harmony found in music and the Immortals have all been met with before in the figure of Eva in Demian and will be met again in the very dominant mother-figure in Narcissus and Goldmund. In the realm denoted by these figures time is no longer; all are ageless and undivided by sex; sin, anguish and pleasure all are transcended. All is cool and unchanging, bright and laughing. The laughter that peals from this realm is "clear and ice-cold. . . " (page 204), "made of crystal and ice, bright and radiant, but cold and inexorable" (pages 172-173). It is a soaring melody flowing from the Immortals who, through humor and detachment, are able to transcend the suffering, misery, distress and guilt of human life.

3) Geist or Natur

Though other pairings might be made, Harry Haller and Hermine are the prime representatives in Steppenwolf of two differing styles and philosophies of life with which, however, both of these characters have affinities. Even with minimal reference to Hesse's use of Natur and Geist one can see Hermine as epitomizing life according to Natur, a life lived in accord with sense desires and sense satisfaction, and Harry as representing the life of one devoted to and formed by the disciplined, educated intelligence.[48] They are opposites; they attract each other, even need each other; they have different gifts but some tendencies in common. Hermine is well versed in dancing, love-making, the arts of eating and drinking, what she calls the "simple" things of life (page 88). The Steppenwolf has academic degrees, knows languages, is generally learned, an intellectual, acquainted with what Hermine calls the "difficult and complicated things" of life (page 88). To Hermine Harry says, "You have all that I lack" (page 108). This relationship, she says, will be an exchange: "I show you my little stage, and teach you to dance and to have a little pleasure and be silly; and you show me your thoughts and something of all you know" (page 125). Harry is the thinker; Hermine the dancer (page 126).

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[48] Not all critics have been equally happy about Hesse's choice of the terms Geist and Natur to express the many conflicting forces of life. . . .

In a brief extract from his dissertation ("The Writer's Image of the Writer," 1951), Peter Haller presents an excellent introduction to this problem. ("The Creative Unconscious and the Spirit," Modern Language Forum, 38, 1953, 28-40). Though he would term the dichotomy one of Soul and Spirit, he readily concedes that in a less restricted sense Soul might better be defined as a battleground for the polarity of Nature and Spirit. He delves into Hesse's never too clearly defined and never fixed conception of the two realms of the Soul and the Spirit. The realm of the Soul is the maternal sphere, with an ambiguous embrace of the idyllic, the innocent, the harmless, of chaos and nihilism, love and cruelty, passion and coldness, pity and incestuous desire, good and evil. The realm of the Spirit is the paternal, the conscious, formative disciplinary force, the guardian of cultural tradition and the revolutionary protagonist of the future, at times associated with prosaic Philistine consciousness and morality, or with academic intellect, and at other times equated with Divinity. Heller draws attention to Hesse's ever-changing attitude toward these opposites. He shows how Hesse was eventually to accept the tension and conflicts occasioned by this dichotomy as the necessary mainspring of creative energy, how he was to recognize the Soul as the source of inspiration and the Spirit as the creative force, and to aspire either to spiritualize the Soul or render the Spirit incarnate (Mileck, pages 166, 167).

The two, Hermine and Harry, are undoubtedly two sides of Hermann Hesse. In the probing detailed in the novel and especially in the Treatise within the novel, Hermann Hesse has noted and brought to the surface undeveloped features of his own--or of any--human personality, features of which time, error and finitude never permit full maturation. Even if it be too simple and is in fact contradicted, there is still a relative amount of truth in terming the dominant antogonists in this pairing variously: 1) maternal and paternal principles; 2) feminine and masculine; 3) Nature and Spirit. Behind this dichotomy may very well loom, in Hesse's case especially, the ideal of reunification in a primitive androgynous human. Each of these dichotomies reflects that separation, that schizophrenic state, which is the human condition. Blatant masculinity or very obvious femininity may be simple ways to self-definition but in a complex and reflective personality such as that of the author of Steppenwolf their compementarity rather than their disparity is most valued. If the masculine or the paternal spirit is taken as epitomizing the forces in a man that work at his conscious formation, that seek learning and knowledge, that seek to spiritualize nature then the feminine part signifies the unconscious, the innocently natural elements, an ability to surrender easily to dance, pleasure and to the rhythm of life (pages 88, 95, 125). Hesse desires some reconciliation of the two in the good life here and this is well illustrated not only in Steppenwolf but in Narcissus and Goldmund and in Magister Ludi. By sex and education Hesse knows himself bound to Spirit, to intellect, to thought, to the conscious. Yet the need and the attraction of, and the dangers too, of the feminine, of inarticulate Nature, are most apparent to him. While he may desire to slip easily into the rhythm of Nature yet he is aware of its limitations and chastizes his fellow German intellectuals paradoxically for being under the hegemony of Nature through their devotion to music:

> . . . I had reflected upon the significance of my relation to music, and not for the first time recognized this appealing and fatal relation as the destiny of the entire German spirit. In the German spirit the matriarchal link with nature rules in the form of the hegemony of music to an extent unknown in any other people. We intellectuals, instead of fighting against this tendency like men, and rendering obedience to the spirit, the Logos, the Word, and gaining a hearing for it, are all dreaming of a speech without words that utters the inexpressible and gives form the formless. Instead of playing his part as truly and honestly as he could, the German intellectual has constantly rebelled against the word and against reason and courted music. And so the German spirit, carousing in music, in wonderful creations of sound, and wonderful beauties of feeling and mood that were never pressed home to reality, has left the greater part of its practical gifts to decay. None of us intellectuals is at home in reality. We are strange to it and hostile. That is why the part played by intellect even in our own German reality, in our history and politics and public opinion, has been so lamentable a one. . . . (pages 135, 136).

Domination by either Spirit or Nature is baneful but a choice between them is each man's inevitable destiny and cross. The only ideal solution, as has been seen, is to attempt to become one with all that is, to not cling to one's dominant element. How much success can be expected? Quite limited success. Living under either sign, Spirit or Nature, or under any other conceivable sign, life is fraught with pain. Hermine to Harry:

> You are surprised that I should be unhappy when I can dance and am so sure of myself in the superficial things of life. And I, my friend, am surprised that you are so disillusioned with life when you are at home with the very things in it that are the deepest and most beautiful, spirit, art and thought! That is why we were drawn to one another and why we are brother and sister. I am going to teach you to dance and play and smile, and still not be happy. And you are going to teach me to think and to know and yet not be happy (page 126).

Yet in the words that immediately follow the reader is driven to question again the very adequacy of this only partially correct division. Hermine says: "Do you know that we are both children of the devil?" Possibly the "both" should be emphasized. Neither Spirit nor Nature is intrinsically or essentially superior or better. Harry replies, "Yes, that is what we are. The devil is the spirit, and we are his unhappy children. We have fallen out of nature and hang suspended in space" (page 126). Hesse is merely reminding us that the children of Nature, like Hermine, share with the Harry Haller type a particular gift of the Spirit--consciousness; and with consciousness the possibility of unhappiness, longing, dissatisfaction, restlessness. Neither Spirit-dominated nor Nature-dominated personalities are free of an admixture of the other. The happy reunion and balance of the two remains an ideal.

What Spirit and Nature may have most in common is a tendency toward excess. That may be the case with certain intractable individuals in

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either camp. Harry Haller and Hermine both admit a fatal desire for too much, an inability to keep within bounds their aspirations, a romantic yearning for more than either Natur or Geist does give, a romantic discontent with finitude. Conceivably, from what has been seen of the strange friendship and attraction of Hermine and Harry, the essential excess could be their (and Hesse's) expectation of somehow, in some utopian circumstance, joining together Natur and Geist in some celestial harmony. To Harry's amazed satisfaction Hermine speaks for both of them when she says in her own idiom:

> Why was it, do you think, I was able to recognize you and understand you?
>
> . . . .
>
> Because it's the same for me as for you, because I am alone exactly as you are, because I'm as little fond of life and men and myself as you are and can put up with them as little. There are always a few such people who demand the utmost of life and yet cannot come to terms with its stupidity and crudeness (pages 125, 126).

And she goes on to speak of the way each can teach the other something and yet remain unhappy and dissatisfied.

This ravenous seeking of more than is ordinarily granted to men is understood as a testimony to the existence of some state or realm where this thirst for "a dimension too many" may be quenched (page 152). Fame, immortality in the minds of men or the history of culture, is rejected as insufficient satisfaction and one that neglects many a "true and real" man (page 152). Hermine explains with Harry's approval:

> No, it isn't fame. It is what I call eternity. The pious call it the Kingdom of God. I say to myself: all we who ask too much and have a dimension too many could not contrive to live at all if there were not another air to breathe

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> outside the air of this world, if there were not eternity at the back of time; and this is the kingdom of truth. The music of Mozart belongs there and the poetry of your great poets. The saints, too, belong there, who have worked wonders and suffered martyrdom and given great example to men. . . . The communion of the saints, . . . it is nothing else but what I meant a moment ago when I called it eternity. It is the kingdom on the other side of time and appearances. It is there we belong. There is our home (pages 152, 153).

The otherwise inexplicable longing for death that Harry and Hermine share is a further witness, in their understanding, to belief in a realm of fulfillment. Their very discontent with the niggardly way in which life fills the cup of desire is itself the force that impels beyond life; Hermine continues:

> It is that (home) which our heart strives for. And for that reason, Steppenwolf, we long for death. . . . Ah, Harry, we have to stumble through so much dirt and humbug before we reach home. And we have no one to guide us. Our only guide is our homesickness (page 153).

Those aware of "a dimension too many" in themselves long for this home, for eternity, for the kingdom, as a state overcoming the dichotomy of Geist and Natur. To truly expect this union of opposites, this transcendence of disparity, here and now is to invite insupportable misery. Here one must choose.

The Final Choice

Any suggestion above that Hesse is completely resigned to awaiting the union of opposites in another realm and content to live with the dichotomy here and now and, further, ready to accept Geist as dominant in his life, must be qualified. *Steppenwolf* does attest ultimately to Hesse's recognition that he is, for better or for worse, Geist-bound and that to attempt thoroughly to live according to Natur would be dishonest and impossible. Further, it must be admitted, Harry Haller ultimately fails to learn well the lessons of Hermine, Pablo, Maria and even of Goethe and Mozart. His Schicksal, he finds, is Geist. This marks a strong continuity with the earlier works of Hesse. In them, the hero was ever looking for his fate and destiny in nature, himself or in life's circumstances. In Demian the hero was taught to take over his own destiny and make it according to his own prescriptions. By Steppenwolf this latter, somewhat arrogant and all-conquering stance has been mitigated as has the ideal of Siddhartha which was immersion in the warmth and flux of life. In place of all this is some inchoate appreciation of the value and worth of lives different from his own, of totally different life-styles and value systems coupled with an admission that his own destiny is that of an intellectual, a man of letters, a man devoted to and dominated at least primarily by Geist, mind, spirit, intellect. ". . . the cold, eternal land of the saints, the intellectual, and such artists as Goethe and Mozart replaces the ideal of the oblivious soul and the warm stream of life" (Mileck, page 83). A life like Hermine's or Pablo's is not without its appeal for him but is regarded as impossible. He may dance to jazz and share the sensuality of Pablo and Maria yet he remains addicted to Buxtehude and Bach, Mozart and Goethe. A not totally unmixed blessing, he perceives. Hence Hermine is killed and Mozart's realm apotheosized.

One of the last and most inscrutable events in the novel is the imagined killing of Hermine by Harry while she lay sleeping by Pablo's side. On the level of the ordinary novel of romance there would certainly be no problem in seeing this as a "simple" act of lover's jealousy on Harry's part. Pablo says subsequently to Harry: "I hope, at least, you did it from jealousy when you saw Hermine and me lying there" (page 217). But to leave it at that or to suggest that this is primary in Steppenwolf is impossible for several reasons. There is Hermine's function as one of Steppenwolf's shadows, a facet of his being, and there is her earlier command that he kill her (page 110).

Mark Boulby sees the killing of Hermine in the dream as "a disastrous reversion to his bourgeois self, an upsurge of disgust with the sensual" on the part of Harry (Boulby, page 200). This certainly is most consistent with the judgment made above that Harry's education in Steppenwolf is not entirely successful. He has not really learned to accept the Hermine-side of himself or of life. Some such conclusion seems inescapable. While he has made a noble effort to accept the other side of himself and of life, his education, background, all the forces of the past, conspire to make it, at least now, impossible. Boulby's "disastrous" may be a shade too strong when one remembers Harry's rather hopeful closing lines, e.g., "One day I would learn how to laugh" (page 218). But for the moment the therapy of Pablo, Hermine and Mozart has not been entirely fruitful. By killing Hermine Harry has demonstrated his rejection of her life-style, i.e., the rejection of that facet of himself. He has pealed off layers of self to see what is there but he is as yet unable to accept it all. It is still the enemy it undoubtedly was in the teaching of Hesse's Pietist youth. An ideal probably rooted in the Pietist understanding of Christianity and reinforced by intellectualism and the author's study of Eastern thought prevails. An inscription on one of the doors of the Magic Theatre--simply recorded and never commented on--defines the ideal Harry may still be clinging to:

> Do You Want to be All Spirit?
> The Wisdom of the East (page 190)

As so often in this labyrinthine novel what one says or understands of it at one moment (as above) is qualified or rejected elsewhere. Here it is the earlier prophecy of Hermine about the killing that must be taken into account. She had told Harry:

> But I need you, not today,--later, for something very important and beautiful too. When you are in love with me I will give you my last command and you will obey it, and it will be the better for both of us. . . . We won't find it easy, but you will do it. You will carry out my command and--kill me (page 110).

Does Hermine foresee that Harry will not advance far enough to accept or integrate herself (Natur) into his life and therefore must kill her? Is it his fate to follow Geist, not only now but conceivably always? "All that she said sounded as convincing to me as a decree of fate" (page 111). Further, is it too fanciful or bizarre to think that Hermine's death is somehow, on another level (that of her human existence) her fulfillment, her return to or entry into the embrace of Mother and Natur?

To repeat, one finds Haller's ideal and Hesse's to be definitely weighted in favor of Geist, yet not without some reluctance about parting with the life of Natur. And, in his constant attempt to unite opposites, Hesse does intimate near the end of Steppenwolf that the two ultimately are not so disparate but identical in fact.

Mozart rebukes Harry for killing Hermine and summarizes his teaching to him:

> You are to live and to learn to laugh. You are to learn to listen to the cursed radio music of life and to reverence the spirit behind it and to laugh at its distortions. . . . (page 216).

Then he himself is transformed into Pablo (page 217). Pablo and Mozart are ultimately identical. Through the major part of the book Harry's instruction in how to live has been mostly from the side of Pablo, Maria, Hermine but also from Mozart, the Immortal. Each is able to instruct him in what he needs most of all and what can take him beyond, above or through life's painful dichotomies. All have tried, again and again, to teach him to laugh, to take himself less seriously, to let go, to allow the self to be dissolved. All offer a way through the thicket of life to the "world unknown to men, a world beyond all suffering, and born of divine humor" (page 204) (Italics mine).

All has not been in vain. Though unsuccessful in that integration and transcendence that define perfection or salvation, Harry has not given up; in fact, he is left considerably more hopeful and less suicidally inclines than when first encountered.

> I understood it all. I understood Pablo. I understood Mozart, and somewhere behind me I heard his ghastly laughter. I knew that all the hundred thousand pieces of life's game were in my pocket. A glimpse of its meaning had stirred my reason and I was determined to begin the game afresh. I would sample its tortures once more and shudder again at its senselessness. I would traverse not once more, but often, the hell of my inner being.
>
> One day I would be a better hand at the game. One day I would learn how to laugh. Pablo was waiting for me, and Mozart too (pages 217, 218).

In view of the teaching of the Treatise one other major and glaring failure of Haller's must be recorded. He, and Hesse, in coming back again and again to the Geist-Natur dichotomy, have forgotten or rejected its teaching about the many selves and the deceptive division of man into Geist and Natur. It may be fairest to Hesse to say that in the novel he at least seriously considers the alternative view, i.e., that man is made up of many components and is not reducible to a composition of Spirit and Nature. His return, despite all this, to the Geist-Natur opposition and its persistence in later works, demonstrates Hesse's ineluctable debt to Pietist Christianity and to the Western Christian tradition generally. Along with Hesse's and the hero's inability to easily accept all that Natur implies (the killing of Hermine) goes also the inability to really shake free of the basic Western dichotomy of Spirit and Nature, more commonly termed the Soul-Body dichotomy.

Afterword

Following the Promethean stance of Demian and then the apparently resigned and acquiescent posture of Siddhartha, Steppenwolf comes as a witness to the still very unsettled character of Hesse's pact with life. In a more mature manner the forces of the unconscious comes to light in Steppenwolf and are handled with due respect for a man's limitations in coming to terms with all that may be in the depths of his psyche. The lofty and somewhat facile solution of Siddhartha, a kind of acceptance of all that is and merging with it in order to be at peace, seems to be recognized implicitly here as at the very least premature. Steppenwolf clearly indicates that the writer had experienced, after Demian and Siddhartha, some violent eruptions and turbulences of the soul that seem to mark many a man's middle age. Earlier patterns for adjusting to life are shaken and even what had been learned seems illusory. Hesse picks up the pieces of shattered earlier syntheses and works at a more fluid synthesis than Demian and Siddhartha had provided, aware that there is little question of totally mastering the material. Geist and Natur are both given in humanity; ideally both should find scope in an individual personality. But the writer, in the person of Harry Haller, perceives that life, environment and upbringing have all limited his ability to simply rearrange at will the pieces. He will continue to try for a broader synthesis but, in the meantime, he is Spirit (Geist)--dominated for better or for worse. This may not allow, at least ideally, adequate place to the forces of Natur but a perfect balance of Geist and Natur is out of the question.

The ideal of Steppenwolf is the dissolution of the self and its limiting peculiarities whether these are called intellecutalism, sensuality, moralism or whatever. To achieve this dissolution the self must be denied both metaphysically--it is an illusion--and practically--it must be disintegrated or reduced to an infinite number of elements or parts so that it becomes identified with all that is, with the All, Brahman. The self must not be taken seriously in the manner that bourgeois society seeks to enforce but truly "laughed to bits."

Humor, if indeed that can be managed by the Steppenwolf's wooden psyche, provides both a way of living while the perfect dissolution is unrealized and the means of participation in the serene and transcendent stance of the Immortals beyond all the painful and disruptive dichotomies of human life. A lighter touch in his way of living, despite his psychic limitations, Hesse or Haller can and must practice; his very failures and problems are its material. As has been noted, humor here is really a profound sort of detachment or non-attachment such as mystics the world over have ever taught.

Of all these elements that make up the stuff of Steppenwolf, the Spirit and Nature dichotomy dominates the next work to be considered, Narcissus and Goldmund.

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CHAPTER IV

The Novels of the Third Period of Hesse's Life

Said the Sun to the Moon--"When you are but a lonely white crone,
And I, a dead King in my golden armour somewhere in a dark wood,
Remember only this of our hopeless love
That never till Time is done
Will the fire of the heart and the fire of the mind be one."
Edith Sitwell

I. Narcissus and Goldmund

Summary

Narcissus and Goldmund, ostensibly a tale of the middle ages, opens in the cloister of the monastery and school of Mariabronn. The Abbot, Daniel, is a modest, kind, good man of no scholarly ambitions or pretensions. Outstanding among his subjects is the young monk Narcissus, a brilliant intellect, an example of Apolline poise and one endowed with a gift of understanding men. This latter talent he soon exercises on a newly-arrived student at the school, Goldmund. This adolescent is brought to the school by his father, a man in the emperor's employ. His mother is apparently dead. The good-looking boy impresses everyone and is himself much impressed by a number of the monastic figures especially the Abbot and Narcissus. The latter he sees as very handsome and young, stern and likable. Narcissus is strongly attracted to the young student who endeavors to be a model pupil. However, after an initiatory fight with a fellow classmate, Adolf, Goldmund is induced to accompany Adolf and a few others on a forbidden foray into the village. Here they dally innocently with some local girls, one of whom does give Goldmund a brief kiss though with a little overt encouragement. Goldmund's conscientiousness and sensitivity combine to make him ill over the incident. This provides the occasion for a long talk with Narcissus. Narcissus works at persuading Goldmund not to imitate him or anyone else but to find and express his own personality. Integral to this is Narcissus' conviction that Goldmund has forgotten his childhood and mother and needs to recall these. Narcissus sees his duty as Goldmund's mentor and friend to help Goldmund unlock his real self.

In turning Goldmund away from the imitation of himself Narcissus is emphasizing a central theme of the book, the validity of different approaches to life. He and Goldmund typify respectively two lives to be variously denominated: that of Logos and Eros, of *Geist* and *Natur*, of Intellect and Feeling or of Religion and Art. Instructed by Narcissus Goldmund soon finds an opportunity for unfolding his heretofore hidden self.

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While out picking herbs for the infirmarian he meets a local girl and finds the beginning of his true vocation in making love to her. He bids farewell to Narcissus and spends another night with the girl Lise. She then returns to her husband after setting the pattern for most of Goldmund's subsequent exploits: a sudden, intuitive recognition of a lover, lovemaking and a fairly quick separation.

Goldmund has begun his wandering in the course of which there will be ample scope for the actualization of his special genius, loving and being loved. Much of the story is of his amatory adventures. Typical is one of his earlier experiences with a farm family whom he asks for hospitality. The husband is somewhat reluctant to receive a stranger but does and the wife immediately senses in Goldmund her dream-lover. Goldmund responds quickly. His handsomeness and, more, his innocent openness guarantee him a constant success which he unabashadely enjoys while occasionally musing on the shortness of his loves.

A knight receives him into his home and he uses his education in Latin to help the knight with a chronicle he is writing. All the while he is using his charms on the two daughters, Lydia and Julie. His success with Lydia arouses jealousy in Julie and soon all three are in bed together. Jealousy finally reveals Goldmund's intimacy with the girls to the father and irately he drives Goldmund off his estate.

Things get even more difficult when Goldmund takes up with a more professional wanderer called Viktor. When the latter tries to rob him, Goldmund ends up killing him. He is saved from starvation by another woman friend and comes finally to a rich and beautiful area. Here he goes to confession and is quite overwhelmed with a carved wood statue of the Virgin Mary in the church. He seeks out the artist, a Master Nicklaus, and is able to get himself apprenticed to him. He begins a wood carving of St. John the Evangelist modeled on Narcissus. Nicklaus is very pleased with the finished statue and offers Goldmund a permanent position and the hand of his rather stiff daughter. To Nicklaus' chargrin Goldmund rejects these emblems of bourgeois security and resumes his wandering life.

Once again, though not very willingly, Goldmund acquires a companion named Robert, a wandering religious pilgrim. They soon come upon gruesome evidence of the plague. Over Robert's fainthearted objections Goldmund picks up a girl Lene, a survivor of the plauge, as a companion. The three settle down to a pastoral life in the forest till a vagrant tries to rape Lene. Goldmund kills the man and shortly afterward Lene dies of the plague and Robert departs.

Goldmund returns to the city where he had been apprenticed and finds Nicklaus dead of the plague. He soon ignites the heart of the governor's mistress, a haughty, beautiful woman named Agnes. He becomes her clandestine lover, but is soon discovered and imprisoned. He plots to kill the priest who comes to confess him and escape in his habit but the priest who comes is in the habit of Mariabronn. It is Narcissus, now the Abbot. He is in the city on business and obtains Goldmund's release. They return to Mariabronn.

At the monastery Goldmund sets up a workshop and carves figures for a lectern. He confesses to Narcissus. Soon he acquires an apprentice named Erich but once again feels he must wander off. This time it is not so successful. Age and illness have conspired to take away his attractiveness to women. So he returns to Mariabronn aged, discouraged and tired. Narcissus confesses his love to Goldmund. The latter dies shortly afterwards in Narcissus' company assuring the Abbot that he goes to his mother and is at peace.

Steppenwolf marks the culmination of the interior turbulence and torment of Hesse's life as this is reflected in the closely allied direction of his literary work. In that novel and in our brief glance at the Krisis poems of the same period the despair and bitterness of a middle-aged thinker, an outsider in the bourgeois world of the twenties, stood out in bold if chaotic relief. Yet the ultimate tenor of this last work was optimistic: hopeful of the individual's ability to change, to try again, to lose himself finally; accepting of the necessary direction of one's nature and fate; and trusting in regard to a realm inhabited by Mozart and the Immortals where a joyful and detached transcendence of painful dichotomies is a reality, a reality that can be foreshadowed and incipiently realized here and now through humor. In 1930, within three years of the publication of Steppenwolf, Narcissus and Goldmund[1] appeared in print, testimony to Hesse's continuing awareness of life's painful dichotomies but also, at least in the idyllic romanticism of its form, to some modicum of detachment about them. As will appear, there are numerous qualifications to make about these generalizations but the meaning of the novel can only be appreciated if some start is made with such simplifications.

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[1] Hermann Hesse, Narcissus and Goldmund, trans. Ursule Molinaro (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968). References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page.___). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume v. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, v, page ___).

Intimate, psychological suggestions about the meaning of these works are easily interpreted pejoratively by those so inclined. Yet, once more by way of generalization, there is an interesting and not to be neglected bond between the two novels that points to a very human problem of a man of Hesse's age. One of the doors through which Harry Haller stepped in Steppenwolf led him to a revised re-run of his youth; this time, in place of his earlier timidity and reticence, Harry experienced all the loves he missed "historically." Narcissus and Goldmund is, in great part, similarly an account of a rather vast number, judged by ordinary standards, of amatory exploits recounted romantically and in a golden haze, an account quite understandably likely to arise from the soul of a man of fifty. Hesse is, at the time, between his ill-fated second marriage and his third, (he was to marry his third wife, Ninon Ausländer in 1931) torn asunder by his vivid recognition of the Geist-Natur dichotomy, attempting to accept the hegemony of the former. This all leads to the further generalization that Narcissus and Goldmund, while possibly striving to accept Geist, testifies strongly to the writer's as yet unexorcised attachment to the way of Natur, of art, of sensuality, of Eros.

Goldmund, the wandering apostle of Eros, is, Hesse wrote, an incorporation of his own nature (Boulby, page 216). And if, as seems undeniable, Goldmund is the shadow of Narcissus, then the two correspond to *the*--if the warning of the *Steppenwolf* may be ignored for a moment--primary aspects of Hesse's own troubled personality.[2] *Narcissus and Goldmund* is yet another attempt, like *Steppenwolf*, to come to terms with *all* the personality, conscious and unconscious, *Geist* and *Natur*, despite the thin veneer of disinterested art given to the work by its romantic idyll form. Harry Haller, the Steppenwolf and, as always, Hermann Hesse, are present again, split this time into two principal personae, Narcissus and Goldmund.

Form

After *Steppenwolf* the attempt in *Narcissus and Goldmund* to let literary form predominate over the probing of personal problems is patent. Surely, as was noted in the previous section, *Steppenwolf* has a rather intricate form, chaotic at first look and convoluted, but a form dictated by the surfacing of Hesse's unconscious. More specifically *Narcissus and Goldmund* recovers some of the lyrical and musical characteristics of the prose of *Siddhartha* though without attempting to duplicate the almost stiff hieratic quality of *Siddhartha's* language. Possibly *Siddhartha* could be written in such a consistently lofty and liturgical prose because, while Hesse was certainly pursuing his own quest there, it was being sought in terms of religious thought which he found congenial but which were not identical with his personal aspirations or problems. These latter seem to determine how and what he assimilates of Eastern thought in Steppenwolf. In Narcissus and Goldmund the emphasis goes back somewhat--one must say--superficially, to form and style but they cannot completely confine the Narcissistic preoccupations of Hesse. Boulby says this most succinctly and clearly:

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[2] Carl Gustav Jung, *Psyche and Symbol*, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo, trans. Cary Baynes and F. C. R. Hull (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1958), page 7. Jung says the shadow can be understood largely in terms of "the contents of the personal unconscious." And "To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real."

> It (Narcissus and Goldmund) is a work composed by an artist who is devoted to play, but whose deepest necessity was not to play but to confess (Boulby, page 211).

Narcissus and Goldmund is Künstlerroman in the tradition of Gertrude and Rosshalde but at a more mature level. Narcissus and Goldmund has all the accoutrements of a simple and nostalgic medieval tale of love: wandering, wenching, fighting, knights and churchmen, liturgical seasons and the trappings of Catholic religion. These have, by dint of familiar repetition in Western literature, become a sort of "play" for writers. But constantly erupting or coming to the fore for the reader of Narcissus and Goldmund is the author's concern with his own interior:

> Thus Narcissus and Goldmund should primarily be understood as the conversion of confession into music, into cadences, and as the refuge-seeking of the disappointed mystic in art (Boulby, pages 212-213).

The Tale and Its Meaning in Hesse's Quest

Before entering on an analysis of the view of self-realization advanced in Narcissus and Goldmund, it may be good and certainly appreciative of the novel as a narrative or romance to look briefly at one aspect of it on this latter level. The central relationship between Narcissus and Goldmund while illustrative, symbolic, of the ways of Geist and Natur, is also a compelling love relationship or friendship between two men. In nearly every one of the preceding novels some degree of love relationship between two men has been noted, from the strong attachments of adolescents and young men to each other in Camenzind, Beneath the Wheel to that of Demian and Sinclair. In Steppenwolf, though this was less prominent, the inevitable kiss was given by Pablo to Harry.

In Narcissus and Goldmund the love between the two is especially strong, central, explicit. While sufficient in itself to form the skeleton of the story, this love is also a very concrete mirror of the "hopeless passion" of Spirit and Sense for each other. Homosexuality may be too strong a term for the relationship in view of 1) the overtly chaste character it maintains in the novel and 2) of any comparison with novels and plays of more recent times that treat homosexuality. Hesse's lovers would hardly be visible set next to the blinding clarity and explicitness of contemporary depictions of homosexual relationships. Nevertheless, Narcissus and Goldmund marks a culmination of this thread in Hesse's novels and the attachment between the two protagonists is strong and disturbing enough to elicit fear from Narcissus. Entranced by the radiant youth who has arrived at the monastery school, Narcissus begins to understand better the attraction some of the older men feel at times for a novice or pupil--"now . . . he knew the temptation to love the charming boy, to make him laugh, to run a caressing hand through his blond hair" (page 19). ". . . he loved the blond adolescent altogether too much." And he had to brave cloister disapproval (pages 30, 34, 35).

Goldmund too, despite his very evident heterosexuality feels too, throughout the story, a consistently strong love for Narcissus; a "constant courtship" he calls it (page 162). Even near the end of the story, the flame is still strong enough to cause Narcissus to rebuke himself for his attachment after Goldmund leaves the monastery for the second and last time:

> Narcissus struggled. He mastered himself; he did not betray his calling. He deviated in no way from his strict service. But he suffered from a sense of loss and from the recognition of how much his heart, which was to belong only to God and to his office, was attached to his friend (page 304).

As Goldmund nears death Narcissus kisses him and confesses his love (page 310).

Despite the space given to this idealistically depicted love of two men for each other (perhaps a necessity in Hesse's defining of his unconscious), it is easily seen as the background and symbol of the always strange and confounding yearning of spirit for sense and sense for spirit which Narcissus and Goldmund finds typical of the human condition.

Self-Realization

Whereas there was a sense in which Demian was leading Sinclair to become his own Demian, Narcissus, who is truly Demian-like in serving as Goldmund's mentor, exorcist and analyst, must be concerned to dissuade Goldmund from too close an imitation of himself. Very soon after Goldmund's arrival, his admiration and love for his handsome teacher are in full bloom. Narcissus quickly begins to use his appropriately Spirit-originated quality of mind, the ability to distinguish, to see differences, ('versessensein auf das Finden von Unterschieden,' GS, v, page 47) for Goldmund's development. Expectedly the latter demonstrates his dedication, albeit as yet unconscious, to the mother-principle: he resents differences between them as separating him from the person he loves (pages 42-43). Narcissus has to persuade the young student to accept their differences and specific characters as fate, destiny:

> It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is: each the other's opposite and complement (page 43) (des andern Gegenstück und Ergänzung, GS, v, page 49).

In attempting to free Goldmund from his shell, to "give him back his true nature" (page 30) (seine eigentliche Natur, GS, v, page 36), Narcissus is exercising a painful detachment and disinterest for he knows he may easily lose the friendship of Goldmund this way. The latter is too young and unaware to take gracefully to Narcissus' insistence: ". . . our friendship has no other purpose, no other reason, than to show you how utterly unlike me you are" (page 34). For the young idolater to be told that he is unlike his idol only intensifies one of the many pains inevitably involved in adolescent love. The interplay or interlacing of the ordinary torments of love and friendship with the subtler task of the awakening of one party to his true self is a fascinating accomplishment which is paralleled or continued throughout the novel. It is reminiscent of *Demian* where the young hero's awakening to manhood is intertwined with the vigorous efforts of his *daimon* to bring him to the *übermensch* ideal.

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As exorcist and analyst Narcissus early calls out the hidden, unrecognized demon that strangles the growth of Goldmund's true self. What inhibits his flowering is, Narcissus finally tells him, that "You've forgotten your childhood. . . . " (page 44). This passage and an earlier one recounting Narcissus' speculation about what he regards as Goldmund's ill-conceived desire to imitate his own vow of chastity inject a curiously nineteenth and twentieth century note into this medieval tale. Goldmund's penitence over the episode of clandestinely meeting and talking to the village girls has triggered Narcissus' conviction that there was a demon to be brought into the open:

> Narcissus no longer had any doubt about the nature of Goldmund's secret. It was Eve who stood behind it, the original mother (die Urmutter). But how was it possible that the awakening of sex met with such bitter antagonism in such a beautiful, healthy, flowering adolescent? There must be a secret enemy (*Es muszte ein Dämon am Werke gewesen sein, ein heimlicher Feind* . . .) who had managed to split this magnificent human being within himself and turn him against his natural urges (*seinen Urtrieben*). This demon had to be discovered, had to be conjured up and made visible; only then could it be defeated (page 34) (GS, v, page 40).

Complementary to this is the young monk's pondering about Goldmund's father: why is he so shadowy in Goldmund's mind? how has he so removed the mother and childhood from Goldmund's life (page 37)?

A conversation between Abbot Daniel and Narcissus yields the information that Goldmund's mother had in some way brought disgrace upon his father and run away; that the father "had tried to suppress the mother's memory in his young son, as well as any vices he might have inherited from her. And that he had most probably succeeded, because the boy was willing to offer his life up to God in atonement

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for his mother's sins" (page 50). Later it is revealed that his mother "had been a dancer, a wild beautiful woman of noble, though poor, birth" and, after being made respectable by her husband, had turned to seducing men and acquired a reputation as a witch (page 56).

Narcissus' insight into the nature of Goldmund's demon, therefore, is correct. His efforts to bring it out into the open are successful also to the point where Goldmund faints and is put to bed by the dramatic character of the recognition. The mother-image has been brought to consciousness and begins henceforth to appear in his consciousness. His book-long journey to the mother has begun as Narcissus judges to be only right--for Goldmund. His assumed vocation to the cloister has been made a shambles in order that the path to his true destiny be cleared (pages 66-67). Here two most consistent Hessean themes are united: 1) the earth-mother image as 2) the guide, lodestone, of a man's fate, drawing him on and determining his life-style. Narcissus serves Goldmund by making him clear to himself (page 64), awakening him from his sleep, his indifference to his unconscious (page 65), and by clearing a path inside him for an unusual destiny (page 67).

Much later, at the completion of Goldmund's journeying days (except for a brief later attempt) Narcissus, now Abbot John, profers a Scholastic treatment of the matter of calling, fate, self-realization. In the intervening years both have achieved some measure of fulfillment in disparate ways: Narcissus as thinker and ascetic; Goldmund as lover and artist. Narcissus attempts to clarify the philosophical underpinning of this matter of self-realization, specific callings and the complementariness of diverse callings, such as thinker and artist:

> The thinker tries to determine and represent the nature of the world through logic. He knows that reason and its tool, logic, are incomplete--the way an intelligent artist knows full well that his brushes or chisels will never be able to express perfectly the radiant nature of an angel or a saint. Still they both try, the thinker as well as the artist, each in his way. They cannot and may not do otherwise. Because when a man tries to realize himself (sich zu verwirklichen sucht, GS, v, page 287) through the gifts with which nature has endowed him, he does the best and only meaningful thing he can do. That's why in former days, I often said to you: don't try to imitate the thinker or the ascetic man, but be yourself, try to realize yourself (page 280).

In clarifying this further for Goldmund Narcissus relates the whole to the Aristotelian-Thomistic doctrine of hylomorphism. God is perfect being, fully realized, in whom there is no potentiality; all else is a mixture of potentiality and realization. So the artist or the thinker realizes himself by moving "from potential to deed, from possibility to realization" (von der Potenz zur Tat, von der Möglichkeit zur Verwirklichung, GS, v, page 288) to become more fully like the divine model.

Significant in this teaching on self-realization and that it is given by Narcissus is the implicit hegemony of Spirit, of mind, that it recognizes. Sympathetic and even enamored as he is of Goldmund's life-style Hesse does not simplistically trade the call of mind in for what could be termed the call of the wild. The concept of self-realization, Goldmund's being turned in the direction of his own completion, the evaluation of it, the criteria for it, are all drawn from and by the mind. Even Goldmund the lover depends on his own mind to become himself aware, conscious of his calling. Whatever be the continuing conflict between the two, for Hesse Geist is irretrievably dominant, an undeniable heritage.

Geist and Natur

It is mind, the mind of Narcissus, that determines that there are two basic life-patterns that, granted the simplification, most men must follow. At Steppenwolf made abundantly clear, and this is not withdrawn here at all, these two are not cleanly discrete, clear-cut distinctions but they do have a limited value. After the grand and exhaustive effort in Steppenwolf to transcend the dichotomy, to dissolve the self, Hesse is less optimistic about overcoming the separation and uniting the opposites, In any case, in Narcissus and Goldmund they practically define the two protagonists with reservations to be made later. By way of giving more definition to the two terms as used here a list of the qualities, contrasting, that each exhibit in the novel may be helpful before coming to see them in the lives of Narcissus and Goldmund. Besides Geist and Natur, Geist and Seele or Logos and Eros might equally well be used.

The disciple of Geist is analytic, a thinker; the disciple of Natur a dreamer with the soul of a child who will find fulfillment in loving and receiving love (pages 17, 36). The difference is not between having mind or being intelligent and not being intelligent but between two differing types of intelligence (page 42). The Natur-dominated takes his being from the mother and is endowed with "strong, delicate senses," "strength to love, the ability to feel;" his home is the earth; the Geist-dominated is a creature of reason who lives in the world of ideas or the "desert" (page 45). Each has its dangers: for Geist, that of "suffocating in an airless void;" for Natur, that of "drowning in the world of the senses" (page 45). One is the heir of the father and mind and will; the other the heir of the mother, dedicated to desire and death (page 63). Geist nourishes a spiritualized love; Natur a sexual, carnal, sensual love. The bourgeois proprietor and his security tend to come from the dedication and calculation of mind; the child of nature is a wanderer, unable to abide a home and stability. The list could be made quite interminable but this and subsequent concrete depiction of the two at work in Narcissus and Goldmund should make the division as clear as is possible.

Goldmund's Way

Narcissus and Goldmund is easily taken for a hymn to the earth-mother because of the space devoted to her and the constant references to her in Goldmund's thought and desire. This undoubtedly is related to Hesse's own psychology in which she played a large role. And it is certainly impossible to appreciate the meaning of the story without paying attention to this mother-motif.[3] Intimately related to this is the theme of love and art and their relation to death. These themes will be separated; hence: a) Mother Eve and b) love and art.

Mother Eve

As in Demian the mother image maintains here its value and significance as a unitive vision for the hero or the author: a figure

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[3] A disclaimer must be made here of any attempt, fruitful as it undoubtedly would be, to adequately plumb the depths of the mother-symbol from the viewpoint of psychology or psychiatry. Rather the text is regarded here in what it says to an informed reader, not the specialist in some branch of psychological science.

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or concept which brings together in a transcending harmony all the disparate movements and the dichotomies of life and of the psyche, especially Geist and Natur while being itself basically the embodiment of Natur. This last phrase means that, whatever be the hegemony granted to reason and will in the conduct of life, the forces of the mother-heritage are seen as primary, even primeval, the source of all else, even of mind and will.

Goldmund's secret, the signature of Eve, of the mother, on him, is henceforth the guide and criterion for his development. The fainting spell (above, page 9) has served to melt away the "Spielerische, Altkluge," and "Unechte," the childish, precocious and inauthentic elements in his heretofore misdirected character (page 57) (GS, v, page 63). These elements were manifesting themselves in Goldmund's attempts to follow his father's wishes about his vocation, in his mistaken efforts to follow the path of Narcissus.

The latter, aware of this wrong direction, has awakened in Goldmund the dream-image of the mother which is to be his guide, which is the key to his real character. From the moment he gives up the task of gathering herbs for Father Anselm and begins plucking the flowers of the fields and embraces Lise, he is on the way to the mother.

> But one thing he did know; it was good to travel toward his mother, to be drawn and called by her. He felt alive. . . . At any rate, he had to follow her and submit his fate to her. She was his star (page 186).

> ". . . ihr hatte er sein Schicksal anheimzustellen, sie war sein Stern" (GS, v, page 191).

She is the ever-present and ever constant Schicksal of Hesse's hero. "Like the pit in the cherry" (page 185), his own remembered mother forms the kernel of the image which will be augmented and transformed, while yet remaining faithful to the tall, blonde, blue-eyed and radiant woman (pages 53, 55). The image forms itself first of all in fairly conventional terms as that of the mother of the home: "a cloud of life, of warmth, and tenderness and innermost enticement" (page 55). But very soon the image passes from one of simple, warm domesticity to include more erotic elements and a range of qualities not likely to be associated with her in public depictions as mother of a family. The unfolding of these other elements in the mother is accomplished by or for Goldmund largely through his extensive experience of women and girls in sexual love. Each, from Lise through Lydia, Julie, Lene, Rebecca to Agnes, adds something to his image of the mother, and his understanding of his calling.

The call of the mother is not merely a call to the forgotten childhood and home but a mating call as well (page 223). Women like Lise, Goldmund knows, are not his mother yet her call comes to him through them (page 78). In answer to this call, after his first meeting with Lise, he leaves Narcissus and the monastery. Appropriately he crosses a river separating him from the waiting Lise and she, with whom his experience has been mostly a matter of caresses and very few words, not leads him further into the dark forest. The "wordless world," the blind, and mystery-filled country where words and thought are no longer (page 83) (". . . *in das blinde geheimnisvolle Land ohne Worte, ohne Gedanken*" GS, v, page 89). The world of the mother is the opposite of that he has left where word, thought and differentiation

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prevailed. Goldmund is following a path similar to that of the German intellectuals whom Hesse berated in Steppenwolf; they surrendered themselves to the spell of music, the maternal world, and left the world of politics and government to others. Plainly, despite the rebuke, Hesse is inclined to the same path. Goldmund opts for the life-style which he will follow and return to throughout his life, the life of the mother's child, ever wandering on his way to her, never settled and never totally committed to any one of the many loves through which her call comes, a way devoid of ambition and proprietorship, security and stability:

> Obedient to no man, dependent only on weather and season, without a goal before them or a roof above them, owning nothing, open to every whim of fate, the homeless wanderers lead their childlike, brave, shabby existence. They are the sons of Adam, who was driven out of Paradise; the brothers of the animals, of innocence, . . . time does not exist for them and neither does history, or ambition, or that bizarre idol called progress and evolution, in which houseowners believe so desperately. . . . (page 194).

The all-dominating image grows in Goldmund's heart and mind from that of his mother specifically to that of a more impersonal Eve, "mother of men" and "the source of life itself," whom he hopes ultimately to be able to carve in wood (pages 164-165). Most significant is the augmenting of the image to include, beyond the rather ordinary attributes of mother, the opposite elements, so that once again an all-embracing, comprehensive image eventuates. The Hessean ideal--some union of all opposites, some harmony of all the contrarieties of existence--persists, despite constant evidence in the earlier novels of the inability of any one man to embrace and realize all this no matter how ravenous his appetite, no matter how clearly he has a dimension too many. In one of his reflective moments Goldmund muses on the transitoriness of desire and its satisfaction, its alternation with pain and death, and finds solace in knowing that his goal and guide, the mother, is the source of all:

> The mother of life could be called love or desire; she could also be called death, grave, or decay. Eve was the mother. She was the source of bliss as well as of death; eternally she gave birth and eternally she killed; her love was fused with cruelty. The longer he carried her image within him, the more it became a parable and a sacred symbol to him (page 170).

And:

> His mother meant not only all that was graceful; not only were her gentle look of love and sweet, happiness-promising smile caressing consolations; but somewhere beneath this enticing exterior lay much that was frightful and dark, greedy and fearful, sinful and sorrowful, all that gave birth and all death (page 59).

She is both the womb and the tomb, the source of life and its end. Death for him takes on the character of a return to the mother, to her embrace and has the attraction of an incestuous union with her, his mistress. The fascination that death exerts on Goldmund, whatever be the psychological source in Hesse's own psyche, is certainly consistent with the romantics' embracing of and apotheosis of death.

Lene's rape, Goldmund's killing of her attacker and his subsequent encounter with the Black Death, bring more definition to this strange passion for death-mother. Even earlier Goldmund's erstwhile companion Robert had noted the "dreadful curiosity" with which Goldmund had gazed on the Death and its victims (page 205). As Goldmund brutally smashes and kills the attacker, Lene sits by:

> With a forlorn look of lust and admiration she watched her powerful lover dragging the intruder through the heather, throttling him, breaking his neck, and throwing his corpse down (page 214).

While Goldmund thinks "he had never seen anything like it in a woman's face, and had never imagined such a look" (page 215), "the deep passionate desire to participate in the revenge and to kill" (page 215), it is certainly not far from the combined look of cruelty and tenderness that he has imagined in his mother image (page 180). The day of the killing, as he goes to sleep, the mother-face appears in the clouds with "wide, large eyes full of lust and murder" (page 216). Implicitly she seems to be telling him in his regret over this second killing that this too is part of his destiny as one of her heirs; consoled he sleeps.

Shortly afterwards Lene dies of the plague and Goldmund wanders through villages swept by the Black Death, alternately fascinated and repulsed at the violent and orgiastic life of the living. As a result his death is overcome by a stronger feeling, that of a fascination with it and attraction to it. Its expression, whatever be our allowances for the romantic tradition, cannot but strike the ordinary reader as morbid:

> Death howled its song, and Goldmund heard it with burning passion.
>
> Sadly he journeyed on, intoxicated by the song of death, open to the loudly screaming misery of the world, sad, and yet glowing, with eager senses (page 222).

For Goldmund the contemporary depictions of the dance of death with their message of the obligation to die are not accurate depictions of his own thought or feeling:

> In him the wild song of death had a completely different sound, not bony and severe, but sweet rather, and seductive, motherly, an enticement to come home. Wherever the hand of death reached into life, the sound was not only shrill and warlike but also deep and loving, autumnal, satiated, the little lamp of life glowed brighter, more intensely at the approach of death. To others death might be a warrior, a judge, a hangman, a stern father. To him death was also a mother and a mistress; its call was a mating call, its touch a shudder of love (pages 222, 223).

In the mother-image are fused life and death, pain and ecstasy. Her image and smile affirm all that is unlike reason which would distinguish and evaluate. In another vision he sees her:

> . . . the universal mother, leaning over the abyss of life, with a lost smile that was both beautiful and gruesome. She was looking at birth and death, at flowers, at rustling autumn leaves, at art at decay.
>
> Everything had the same meaning to the universal mother. Her chilling smile hung above everything like a moon, sad and pensive (pages 180, 181).

In the face of the turnoil and impermanence of the world, she remains a combination of Mother Eve, the Virgin Mary and the goddess Kali:

> . . . the eternal mother, basic, ancient, forever young, with her sad, cruel smile of love. Again he saw her for an instant: a giant figure with stars in her hair. Dreamily she sat on the edge of the world, plucking flower after flower, life after life, with a playful hand, slowly dropping them into the bottomless void (page 188).

One is struck by Hesse's compatibility, in these images, with so much of Eastern thought whether this matter is dredged from his unconscious or derived from the thought of the East. An example of devotional literature dedicated to the goddess Kali illustrates this:

> Ever art thou dancing in battle, Mother. Never was beauty like thine, as, with thy hair flowing about thee, thou dost ever dance, a naked warrior on the breast of Siva.

> Heads of thy sons, daily freshly killed, hang as a garland around thy neck. How is thy waist adorned with human hands! Little children are thy ear-rings. Faultless are thy lovely lips; thy teeth are fair as the jasmin in full bloom. Thy face is bright as the lotus-flower, and terrible is its constant smiling. Beautiful as the rain-clouds is thy form; all blood-stained are thy feet.
>
> Prasad says: My mind is as one that dances. No longer can my eyes behold such beauty.[4]

Only in such a goddess, such a mother and mistress can Goldmund's ravenous appetite to have, to share and to participate in all that is, from ecstasy to death, be slaked.

An ideal of Goldmund's, already alluded to, is to carve an image of the mother-mistress. This obsesses him from inner necessity; to be able to bring such an image to reality would be some assurance of his own realization of the union of opposites that figure represents; he would be sharing in her universal embrace of all that is, be freed even from the limitations of his life as lover and artist to participate in her ideal union of all qualities, she, the source of them all. His efforts begin with a figurine modeled on Julie and later a statue of St. John modeled on Narcissus which Nicklaus much approves. He notes its clarity and radiant quality and Goldmund hastens to assure him they are imparted by the subject and do not come from the artist himself. Narcissus is his "counterpart" but,

> He could long for Narcissus to the point of tears; he could dream of him wonderfully--but he could not reach him, he could not become like him (page 171).

And this impossibility of ever realizing here and now a merger, a fusion, of Geist and Natur is the reality Goldmund must come to accept, just as on another level, a union of love with Narcissus is impossible, forbidden. The true image he wishes to create both in wood and in himself is that embodied in his visions of the mother, that mystery-laden figure. All great art, he thinks, participates in her union "of the father and mother worlds, of mind and blood." ". . . every obviously genuine work of art had this dangerous, smiling double face, was male-female, a merging of instinct and pure spirituality" (page 171). If he were to achieve his image of Eve-mother, "it would bear this double face more than any other statue" (page 171). Emptied and exhausted by his work on the statue of St. John, Goldmund succumbed again to his wanderlust, for:

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[4] R. C. Zaehner, Hinduism, p. 192.

> The longed-for image of images, the figure of the mother of men, was not yet accessible to him, would not be accessible for a long time (pages 173, 174).

Analogously, one may suspect, the numerous women in Goldmund's life too are approximations to the ideal to which alone he is faithful, the mother-mistress with whom he can only be united in death. No woman, short of the ideal mother, to be found only in death, can be his lasting love. Ultimately he is to recognize, on his death bed, that her secret, her mystery, is not attained in human life, not attainable. She has herself instead really modeled him, not vice versa, and dying is his sure union with her.

> She is seducing me into dying and with me dies my dream, the beautiful statue, the image of the great mother-Eve (page 315).

Only when life's opportunities have slipped from his grasp and death is near can he totally understand that he will not carve the statue:

> But she doesn't want that; she doesn't want me to make her secret visible. She rather wants me to die. I'm glad to die; she is making it easy for me (page 315).

At rare moments in his life Goldmund, although sharing the Hessean enmity toward the bourgeois and the settled life, senses some value encapsulated in the ordered life. Like the Steppenwolf sitting on the stairway admiring his landlady's well-kept and polished house, Goldmund knows that this too must be a part of him. Indeed, life and art both benefit and grow from such tension and conflict. The fact that he is both an artist and a creature possessed of mind and will make for the richness of his life.

> Any life expands and flowers only through division and contradiction. What are reason and sobriety without the knowledge of intoxication? What is sensuality without death standing behind it? What is love without the eternal mortal enmity of the sexes (page 195)?

The interplay of freedom and form, of ecstasy and routine, are the stuff of life and creativity. He and Narcissus need each other; Geist and Natur need each other; thinkers and artists need each other. The years are passing:

> Goldmund seemed to have forgotten that there were other things on earth besides hunger and love, and this silent, eerie onrush of the seasons; he seemed completely drowned in the motherly, instinctive basic world. But in his dreams or his thought-filled moments of rest, overlooking a flowering or wilting valley, he was all eyes, an artist. He longed desperately to halt the gracefully drifting nonsense of life with his mind and transform it into sense (page 195).
>
> (. . . den holden dahintreibenden Unsinn des Lebens durch Geist zu beschwören und in Sinn zu verwandeln, GS, v, page 201.)

Some, like Goldmund, may regard the life of Natur as superior or more desirable or their own destiny. But for one with a dimension too many, like Steppenwolf or Goldmund, it is a struggle to accept this limited life, to renounce or foreswear the power of mind and will and its achievements. One seems forced to alternatives: 1) to live the life of the senses, of sensuality (die Sinnenlust, GS, v, page 255), at the breast of Mother Eve, but with no way of arresting the quick flow of time and age (keinen Schutz gegen die Vergänglichkeit, GS, v, page 254); 2) or one attempts through work to build some lasting monument against fleeting time and in the process loses freedom, sensuality, becomes dried up, like Master Nicklaus. He had never seen the two ideally combined in any man. But "life made sense only if one achieved both. . . ." (page 248). What follows is an excellent statement of the Hessean plaint repeated in varying forms throughout the novels. It suggests that the constant mother-longing evidenced so often with its implication of a reuniting of disparate forces and powers is based ultimately on dissatisfaction with the human condition, with the split or sin that has sundered human life into its dichotomies.

> All existence seemed to be based on duality, on contrast. Either one was a man or one was a woman, either a wanderer or a sedentary burgher, either a thinking person or a feeling person--no one could breathe in at the same time as he breathed out, be a man as well as a woman, experience freedom as well as order, combine instinct and mind (Trieb und Geist, GS, v, page 255). One always had to pay for the one with the loss of the other, and one thing was always just as important and desirable as the other. Perhaps women had it easier in this respect. Nature had created them in such a way that desire bore its fruit automatically, that the bliss of love became a child. For a man, eternal longing replaced this simple fertility. Was the god who had created everything in this manner an evil god, was he hostile, did he laugh ironically at his own creation? No, he could not be evil; he had created the hart and the roebuck, fish and birds, forests, flowers, the seasons. But the split ran through his entire creation. Perhaps it had not turned out right or was incomplete--or did God intend this lack, this longing

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> in human life for a special purpose? Was this perhaps the seed of the enemy, of original sin (Erbsünde, GS, v, page 255)? But why should this longing and this lack be sinful? Did not all that was beautiful and holy, all that man created and gave back to God as a sacrifice of thanks spring from this very lack, from this longing (page 249)?

This passage will be considered again in the final critique of Hesse's work. For now it is evidence of Goldmund's realization that, content as he may be much of the time responding to the demands and seductions of mother and senses, greater yet would be the fusion of *Trieb* and *Geist* (instinct and mind) in one life, in some perfect harmony. Only union with the primeval mother can bring about the longed-for harmony for him and that means surrender to death. Being under the sign of the mother means that fulfillment and death are one and the same.

Love, Art and Death

Death it is that ultimately gives love and art their importance, even their desperate necessity, in Goldmund's life. The English title of some editions of *Narcissus and Goldmund*, *Death and the Lover*, seizes upon one central issue which will be analyzed shortly.

As is unavoidably apparent already love is Goldmund's vocation, his specialty, his life. Abandoning himself to a woman is not merely "being in love" but: "For me it is the road to life, the way toward the meaning of life" (page 79). It makes him blossom: his eyes shine and his voice sings with ecstasy whenever he is under the alluring influence of a woman (page 107). Just envisioning love to come, anticipating an assignation with Agnes, for example, changes the face of the earth for him:

> Two days ago he would not have thought possible that the world would laugh so gaily in his eyes, that he would once more

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> feel the stream of life, of joy, of youth running so fully and urgently through his veins. What a joy to be still alive, to have been spared by death during all these gruesome months! (The months of the plague. Author's note.) (pages 241, 242).

Goldmund's loves rival the amatory athletes of a cheap paperback in their number but not in their mode. They are described by Hesse in true romantic style, often ethereally, without the clinical detail considered necessary in contemporary fiction. Goldmund's adulteries and fornications are rarely given the note of sin. Occasional pangs of conscience occur and moral judgments are made here and there but not, it seems, in order to create any impression of a sinner so much as of an amoral lover. Possibly, there are suggestions of a Dostoevski-like process of redemption through sin but this has, for the most part, to be read into the novel. Rather, the hero is presented most consistently as a rather innocent, perpetual youth ever ready to unabashadely love any willing woman. Chastity does not seem manly to him (page 273). Early in his wanderings as he waits for his meeting with his second woman, like the first, married, he thinks a bit about how this would have bothered him earlier. But his problem is not so much a matter of personal conscience:

> Rather a feeling of guilt for some crime one had not committed but had brought along with one into the world. Perhaps this was what theology called original sin? It might well be. Yes, life itself bore something of guilt within it--why else had a man as pure and aware as Narcissus subjected himself to penance like a condemned felon (page 98)?

Elsewhere the same rift in creation, the split between man and woman, between mind and instinct, is also denominated original sin (page 249). Goldmund's adulteries and his love are pictured as an attempt here and now, largely instinctive to be sure, to overcome that split, to return to unsplit, harmonious innocence. Here as in Steppenwolf Hesse has a fairly traditional notion of original innocence as a state or condition of being free from the division and separation that are de facto with us. Consistently also he sees the return to the mother as a recovery of harmony and unity, an overcoming and healing of the split in creation, a reconciliation of opposites.

A further note on love may be alluded to here though by now it is fairly obvious and has been touched on earlier. Words, it has been noted, are, along with thought, the marks of mind. Love, the expression of the mother-oriented, works through eyes, voices, aromas, caresses, electric intuitions rather than words.

> How strange it was with women and loving! There really was no need for words (page 97).

All was often said through a "subtle, discreet emanation of the skin, by which women and men were able to know at once when they desired one another" (page 97). Words, in fact, in love only lead to misunderstanding (page 98). Unlike his namesake, St. Chrysostom, the Church Father noted for his eloquence and so "golden mouth," this Germanic golden-mouth, Goldmund, is so named for the taste of his lips not for his talk (page 241).

Like every one-sided emphasis throughout the novel this total leaning on love causes conflicts elsewhere in Goldmund's life. It is not easily reconciled with his calling as an artist. Art is another way of bridging the split in man.

> In art, in being an artist, Goldmund saw the possibility of reconciling his deepest contradictions, or at least of expressing newly and magnificently the split in his nature (page 171).

Art unites father and mother worlds, mind and blood (page 171). The

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artist's experiences as a wanderer and lover provide the material and matter which the mind must inform or order in art (page 297). Art needs mind and mind inevitably makes demands on the otherwise easily drifting life of the artist-lover, the sensualist. It may even seem like a form of enslavement.

> Art, such a spiritual goddess in appearance, required so many petty things! One needed a roof over one's head, and tools, woods, clay, colors, gold, effort and patience (pages 171, 172).

While art disciplines and channels the energies and vitality of a sensualist like Goldmund for creative purposes it is always threatening to domesticate him or dry him up.(page 248). Once again the eternal dilemma faces Goldmund, as it does all men; how to reconcile the disparate elements in one's self without quenching one's own special gift, whether it be the fire of the mind or the fire of the heart.

Art and love have a common root: death. They flourish and are necessary because of it. "He thought that fear of death was perhaps the root of all art, perhaps also of all things of the mind" (page 157). And, "What is sensuality without death standing behind it" (page 195)? The same argument is used by Goldmund in his unsuccessful efforts to persuade the Jewish girl Rebekka to accept his love:

> Look, soon death will get us too, and we'll rot in the field and the moles will play dice with our bones. Let us live a little before it comes to that and be sweet to each other (page 225).

The lamp of life glows "brighter, more intensely at the approach of death" (page 223). Life's beauty and charm are more poignant, more to be treasured, because of their fleetingness and inevitable end. Goldmund says it most explicitly to Narcissus after his rescue by the latter from prison:

> Because the world is so full of death and horror, I try again and again to console my heart and pick the flowers that grow in the midst of hell. I find bliss, and for an hour I forget the horror (page 270).

Death is the spur to the artist's creativity and to the lover's passion. Men come and go but "their artist-created images remain unchangeably the same."

> We fear death, we shudder at life's instability, we grieve to see the flowers wilt again and again, and the leaves fall, and in our hearts we know that we, too, are transitory and will soon disappear. When artists create pictures and thinkers search for laws and formulate thoughts, it is in order to salvage something from the great dance of death, to make something that lasts longer than we do (page 157).

The inevitability and the swiftness of death make the artist eager to incarnate his images, to express his grasp of the meaning of things in a manner quite other than that of the thinker (page 293). While art truly is in some degree "the overcoming of the transistory" (page 270) (die Überwindung der Vergänglichkeit, GS, v, page 278), Narcissus and Goldmund both agree it is something more. It seems to express, beyond recollected or present beauties and realities, some image whose true identity and existence is only in the artist's soul. Such is the ever-recurring and always present image of the original mother with her synthesis of all contrarieties, an image not simply recalled from life but transcending life and probably never to be made concrete in any one human creation. She at least is the image operative and reigning in Goldmund's soul which serves as the model and criterion for all his artistic attempts.

As it becomes increasingly clear to Goldmund that the images he makes, reflecting as they do Julie, Lydia, all the women of his life, Narcissus and Abbot Daniel, are always going to fall short of the final image, his natural fear of death is transmuted into a longing for it. For clarity begins to come to him about the identity of the Urmutter with the life of the senses that he loves so much. Realistically, of course, he finds the present possession of women, of forests and valleys, of life itself, immensely preferable to any unknown beyond the veil of death, but the unknown grows in attractiveness. Consonant with his insatiable desire to know and possess everything, even all opposites, he has spent half of his life "courting" Narcissus too (page 311). The love of Narcissus represents Goldmund's longing for the goods of mind and spirit which are part of the total reality he desires to be united with. Narcissus' telling him that he loves him is a partial consummation for Goldmund, the realization of at least one aspect of his dream. Possibly Hesse's depiction of Goldmund goes far to explain the oft-met artist-type with his demands for so many loves and kinds of love beyond the bourgeois pale.

Necessary for Goldmund's ultimate acceptance of death, the return to the mother, is the experience of the inadequacy of art and love. After completing a piece of art that satisfies and absorbs him in the making he finds himself inevitably emptied, bereft of consolation and purpose (page 173). The assuaging power of art is a limited balm for his restlessness.

Love too is at best a transitory consolation. The number and variety alone of Goldmund's loves should attest to the unsatisfying character of all of them. Lydia seems to perceive some of this in his eyes when she says they seem to know "that happiness did not exist

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and that all that is beautiful and lovely does not stay with us long" (page 115). She senses he is always homeless and alone even while in her arms (pages 115, 116). In the end the unsatisfactoriness of love and art compel him to recognize that his fulfillment, while hinted at in every love and every work of art, is to be achieved only in death, in returning to the great mother. The last reinforcement for this conviction comes with his rejection by Agnes when he attempts to reawaken her love. "Dying no longer seems terrible to me" (page 313). The mother's fingers are about his heart to pluck it out and he surrenders to his return to her, to her seduction, hopefully as to a "great happiness, a happiness as great as that of love, fulfilled love."

> I cannot give up the thought that, instead of death with his scythe, it will be my mother who will come to take me back to her, who will lead me back to nonbeing (in das Nichtsein, GS, v, page 318) and innocence (page 312).

Union with her in death is the fulfillment hinted at in all the love and women he has known, a return to the undifferentiated ground and source of all that is, Mother Natur.

Narcissus' Way

In the course of the study of Goldmund's destiny and in the description of the qualities of the Geist and Natur dominated lives, much of Narcissus' interior has been revealed. It is the unique personality and gifts of Narcissus that help bring Goldmund to a knowledge of his true calling, that make him aware, help him break his attachment to what would have been a pseudo-vocation. Despite strictures on the settled life, on the life of the intellect, remarkably few reservations

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are voiced about the quality of the monk-teacher's life. He seems to represent ideally the life of one correctly (because of his nature and destiny) dedicated to the spirit or mind. He himself speaks of the possible dangers in this kind of life, its likely aridity, its removal from ordinary life and concerns, its abstraction, but shows himself a man of mind and religion who understands the way of a lover and sensualist like Goldmund and is capable of real love and an openness to art. For Narcissus intellect, chastity and a settled life are right. Despite Hesse's obvious attraction to Goldmund and his wandering life, the man who lived such an apparently quiet and at times eremitical life in Switzerland editing German authors and studying the thought of the East has great affinities with Narcissus. Too, the name Narcissus, if it is to be given any weight, certainly suggests Hesse and his life-long preoccupation with self-understanding and self-realization. The somewhat facile distinction ofttimes made between the Latin or Mediterranean soul and the Germanic soul may be appropriate here. The former represents thought, clarity and law; the latter all the qualities of feeling, instinct and romanticism. Hesse surely combines these traits himself, in whatever uneasy and partially accepted balance, and fittingly lives his own life in southern Switzerland, on the boundary of the two worlds.

In contrast to Goldmund and his dedication to the life of the senses and love, Narcissus' vocation as a monk-teacher is spoken of as a service of the mind or of the word. As he reflects on his temptation to love Goldmund too much and in the wrong way, he reminds himself what his life is all about:

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> The core and meaning of his life was to serve the mind, to serve the word: the quiet, superior, self-negating guidance of his pupils--and not only of his pupils--toward high spiritual goals (page 19).
> (Der Kern und Sinn seines Lebens war der Dienst am Geist, der Dienst am Wort . . . , GS, v, page 25.)

These remarks may reflect more Hesse's Pietist background than any authentic medieval spirit. Goldmund with his love of the liturgy and hymns probably echoes more truly the Catholic emphasis. Though, of course, the existence of the eminently rational medieval Scholastics supports the image of Narcissus.

More narrowly Narcissus defines himself elsewhere as an analytic mind, a man of science, one who discovers differences. Over against Goldmund's emphasis on feeling and his impugning of "pure thought" Narcissus defends this latter too as a necessary prelude to any practical or effectual use of reason (pages 282-283). And in response to the wanderer's heart-felt protests over the existence of evil and suffering Narcissus presents a theodicy. In these passages Hesse seems determined on giving equal time to the intellect, to mind, and on showing its usefulness and necessity, whether this justification is for his own wavering faith in mind or for some more theoretical balance in his treatment of the two in this novel.

In the days of their final meeting in the cloister-school Narcissus senses his attraction to the handsome young adolescent as an attraction also for his own lost half:

> He recognized Goldmund's nature and understood it deeply, in spite of the contrasts, because it was the other, the lost half of his own (page 30).

The deep love the two have for each other is both in the nature of a dangerous homosexual attraction--at least to some degree--and a longing of the two basic tendencies in man each for its complement. But Narcissus is a model of self-mastery--"Not even for a second could he let this love dwell upon the senses" (page 30)--and retains this so well that Goldmund at times feels kept at a distance. When Goldmund has returned to the monastery for the last time from his ill-fated excursion, and when Narcissus, one suspects, is old enough and mature enough, the latter kisses Goldmund and confesses his love. The confession itself attests too to the degree to which Narcissus was able to fuse some of the qualities of mind and sense within himself:

> Goldmund . . . forgive me for not being able to tell you earlier. . . . Let me tell you today how much I love you, how much you have always meant to me, how rich you have made my life. . . . My life has been poor in love; I have lacked the best of life. . . . If I know nevertheless what love is, it is because of you. I have been able to love you, you alone among all men. You can not imagine what that means. It means a well in a desert, a blossoming tree in the wilderness. It is thanks to you alone that my heart has not dried up, that a place within me has remained open to grace (page 310).

Goldmund has probably preserved Narcissus to some degree from the occupational temptations of the intellectual: pride, self-confidence, a closed-in sufficiency.

Goldmund's reservations about the adequacy of his life-style have been matched by Narcissus' own struggles. In reply to Goldmund's envy of his peace and calm Narcissus answers:

> Oh, there is peace of course, but not anything that lives within us constantly and never leaves us. There is only the peace that must be won again and again, each new day of our lives. . . . But my life is struggle; it is struggle and sacrifice like every decent life; like yours, too (page 294).

And, towards the end, Goldmund awakens doubts, at least momentarily, in Narcissus about the value and validity of his way of life. It seems the final picture emerging from the novel must be one of limited contentment on the part of the representatives of both Geist and Natur. Whereas Goldmund had felt and sensed the need for some discipline by mind of the ebullient forces of his own life and imagination, Narcissus must ponder the absence in his life of sensuality in favor of the life of intellect and contemplation:

> But seen from above, with God's eyes--was this exemplary life of order and discipline, of renunciation of the world and of the joys of the sense, of remoteness from dirt and blood, of withdrawal into philosophy and meditation any better than Goldmund's life? Had man really been created to live a regulated life, with hours and duties indicated by prayer bells? Had man really been created to study Aristotle and Saint Thomas, to know Greek, to extinguish his senses, to flee the world? Had God not created him with senses and instincts, with blood-colored darknesses, with the capacity for sin, lust, and despair (pages 300, 301)?

On the very last page as Goldmund's life ebbs away Narcissus is left pondering the dying man's last words:

> But how will you die when your time comes, Narcissus, since you have no mother? Without a mother, one cannot love. Without a mother, one cannot die (page 315).

In view of Narcissus' great sympathy and understanding for Goldmund and his attraction to him, these enigmatic last works notwithstanding, one can question whether Narcissus is totally without the mother-heritage just as it is patently impossible to say that Goldmund was bereft of the qualities of the mind and spirit.[5]

[5] Narcissus lives in Mariabronn with its prominent feminine symbol at the entrance, a chestnut tree.

Neither Merged nor Separate

There remains a final point not only implicit in what has gone before but really explicit in a number of places: Narcissus and Goldmund complement each other; neither Geist nor Natur lives without the help of the other albeit one of the two must predominate. "He could long for Narcissus . . . but he could not reach him, he could not become like him" (page 171).

It must be said that Goldmund admits that art depends on mind for execution. The dynamism of imagination and sense must be given specific and definite form with the help of the ordering mind. The true artist is in no sense mind-less. His mind is, Narcissus tells Goldmund, not that of a thinker, using concepts, but that of an artist, using images (page 272). And it is mind that makes it possible for the artist to handle and even originate the tools and techniques that bring his image to the light of the exterior world. Perhaps, Goldmund thinks, it is worthwhile to sacrifice some independence and aimlessness to produce a work of art (page 176).

Mind and will exist in the artist, Goldmund knows, and the interplay of sensuality, love, mind and will, contributes to the expansion and fruitfulness of life itself. It halts the "eternal seesaw between lust and despair" (page 272) and gives the graceful but drifting "nonsense of life" some significance (page 195).

Narcissus, too, assists in the explication of this notion of the necessary and good intertwining of the forces of Geist and Natur. He tells Goldmund in his confession of love how much his love has irrigated the dry land of the intellect for him (page 310). Further it seems apparent throughout that Narcissus is no dessicated enemy of love however firm be his dedication to mind and asceticism. From his side his whole life attests to the fruitfulness of some admixture of the two. But for the mind of Narcissus, Goldmund might have been a more wretched Steppenwolf: Narcissus enabled him to find his own route early in life and it was Narcissus also who, as he had promised, was there to save Goldmund in his moment of dire need in prison.

"The split runs through all of creation; probably that is the original sin" (page 249). Duality reigns in everything; one either is a man or a woman. Hesse, it should be dazzlingly clear by now, just finds this hard to accept; his passion for the absolute, the unqualified, which he shares with his mother, finds the inchoate, battle-ridden state of reality unacceptable. It must be overcome; if not here and now, then by a return to the mother, the undifferentiated source and goal of all that is.[6]

It seems lawful to speculate that Hesse himself, the figure behind all his characters, was by education and background, by religious upbringing, a man of Geist, mind and spirit, and not entirely unwillingly so. That same education and background seem to have felt it necessary in the name of spirituality and religion to deny sense and body, something repugnant to Hesse's genuinely artistic, i.e., sense-directed, nature. In his works and life he attempted a better synthesis or harmony of these disparate forces than his Pietist origins allowed or offered. By singing the praises of the

[6] Ball writes of Hesse's mother: "Ihr französisches Calvinistenblut hat eine Leidenschaft für das Unbedingte. . . .", page 73.

foot-loose and lawless life of Goldmund, the artist and lover, he wanted to purge the Natur side of life of the epithet bestowed on it by religion, evil. He consciously, in the tradition of one of his mentors, Friedrich Nietzsche, wished to free it from a solely moralistic judgment. It is a necessary Selbstbejahung. Once the forces of instinct and sense are accepted as good in themselves he is willing to allow a hegemony to spirit; he obviously does not deny its goods.

In Narcissus and Goldmund Hesse is still a Steppenwolf but the overriding tone of this work is not the soaring optimism of Mozart and the Immortals or their Romantic Irony. In fact, it is noteworthy that music in the sense of Buxtehude, Bach, Mozart, is absent from Narcissus and Goldmund. Surely it would have been anachronistic. But further, that type of music would not define the answer Narcissus and Goldmund profers. Narcissus and Goldmund is, rather, a bittersweet folk song singing the joys of the wanderer's life but accepting, somewhat reluctantly and self-consciously, the necessity for order, law, mind. One senses from the amount of space, effort and care taken in delineating Goldmund and his life-style that Hesse's heart is with him but that he knows himself to be ineluctably bound to Geist. There is no balm in the present for this ailment and no superior stance (as in Steppenwolf) from which to accept it. There is only the hope of a return to, a drowning once again in the mother-world through death.

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II. Journey to the East

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes.
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.
George Santayana

The Journey to the East is subtitled Erzählung in the original German.[7] A tale it is, fantastic, mystifying, fanciful and ironic. It is told in the first person by a narrator who is only revealed more than half way through the tale as H. H., a violinist, obviously Hermann Hesse. The sparest outline will be given here in lieu of a summary because of the brevity of the story and little help that would be afforded by a detailed summary.

H. H. is recalling a journey--through space and time, towards the East and into the Middle Ages, through Italy and Switzerland--which he was once involved in. Hesse's actual historical journey to the East years before is symbolic of this lasting one, made by many men, "The League." He hopes to chronicle its course. The journey had been undertaken by the League. In the course of its fabulous journey the servant Leo disappears at Morbio Inferiore. The disappearance of this well-liked, agreeable young man deeply disturbs the pilgrims. It eventuates that really in some manner they had left Leo and not he them.

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[7] Hermann Hesse, Journey to the East, trans. Hilda Rosner (New York: The Noonday Press, 1956). References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page ___). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume vi. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, vi, page ___).

Back in ordinary life H. H. finds Leo living on a street named Seilergraben. Leo seems distant to him when they meet and chides H. H. for giving up his violin. Later he is brought before the League by Leo to be judged by the elders. The president of the League comes in to give H. H. absolution for his desertion of the League and is none other than Leo. In order tobe reinstated H. H. must undergo a test. His test is to consult the League archives about himself. In the niche where the material should be there is nothing but a two-faced statue (back to back). One side is a weak, deteriorating H. H., the other Leo. As he looks on the two merge so that only Leo remains.

Journey to the East in Hesse's Life and Work

Even in considering only ten novels from such an outpouring of work one is struck by the inventiveness and variety of Hesse's literary gift. Without recounting each of the novels it is sufficient to recall the hieratic style of *Siddhartha*, followed by the frenetic and complex manner of *Steppenwolf*; then the idyll character of *Narcissus and Goldmund*. Now in *Journey to the East*, before the ponderous and labored *Magister Ludi*, the author has presented his readers with an allegory about serious matters, faith, the quest for meaning and a center in life, written with the most abandoned type of fancy, whimsy and hide-and-seek with the reader.

Notwithstanding the great ambiguity flowing from the free and indefinite character of the story and its romantic form, *Journey to the*

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East bears the weight of conviction, a conviction not at all independent of the form. Time and place, reality and fantasy, history and fairy tale, are all mingled in a dream-like manner as in this one representative selection.

> One of the most beautiful experiences was the League's celebration in Bremgarten; the magic circle surrounded us closely there. Received by Max and Tilli, the lords of the castle, we heard Othmar play Mozart on the grand-piano in the lofty hall. We found the grounds occupied by parrots and other talking birds. We heard the fairy Armida sing at the fountain. With blown locks the heavy head of the astrologer Longus nodded by the side of the beloved countenance of Henry of Ofterdingen. In the garden, the peacocks screeched, and Louis conversed in Spanish with Puss in Boots, while Hans Resom, shaken after his peeps into the masked game of life, vowed he would go on a pilgrimage to the grave of Charles the Great. It was one of the triumphant periods of our journey; we had brought the magic wave with us; it cleansed everything. The native paid homage on his knees to beauty, the lord of the castle produced a poem which dealt with our evening activities. The animals from the forest lurked close to the castle walls, and in the river the gleaming fishes moved in lively swarms and were fed with cakes and wine (page 30).

This implicit dismissal of all the rules of reason, the laws of physics and history is not merely play or fortitous. It is a good part of the message of the tale; the rejection of reason in its vaunted sufficiency, the rejection also of technology and efficiency, of modernity and progress, clarity and science, in favor of a higher profounder, more personal wisdom. The latter, of course, has always occupied Hesse. Form and content are wedded in preaching the vanity, ephemerality and overestimation of practical and bourgeois achievements. More positively style and meaning pronounce the greatness of faith, spirit (Geist) and loving service. More outrageously, to the modern spirit, he says through Leo that life is a game (page 72). Hesse shows himself faithful to the teaching of his essay Ein Stückchen Theologie where he aligned himself with the devout and believing rather than with the rationalists. Still, after these many years, he remains too a faithful romantic.

What has just been said and the centering of the whole tale around a never-ending quest indicate that it is typically romantic. "One paradox, however, must be accepted and this is that it is necessary to continually attempt the seemingly impossible" (page 7). Romantic Irony dictates such a quest and the fact that it is pursued by some mysterious brotherhood or league of like souls only reinforces the romanticism. Nostalgia or at least reverent and loving reference to heroes of the past or of literature such as Don Quixote, Parsifal and St. Christopher and the evocation of never-never lands and exotic people such as Butterfly Island, Zipangu and Kyffhauser are other notes of romanticism. All this might be only of minimal interest but that, taken with the meaning of the text, they all bespeak a most significant result or aspect of romanticism: discontent with things as they are. The past or the future is usually to be preferred.

Completed in 1931, Journey to the East was published in 1932. It serves to some degree to link Hesse's previous work with the odd and monumental last work Magister Ludi which is placed entirely in an imaginary future. The earlier works, if it may be repeated once again, were obviously fictional records of Hesse's own quest for self-understanding and self-realization. Others may read concern for others into the earlier works, but the evidence seems to be that while Hesse was not unconcerned with others (he was by no means an anti-social ogre), still others, the whole world around the individual, in fact, are not much more than background for the individual quest. Certainly the bourgeosie are constantly rejected for their Philistinism and pettiness but no great effort is made to relate positively the individual to them or men in general, but only to individuals. The theme of service was touched on in *Peter Camenzind* and *Siddhartha* but hardly emphasized. Subtly and quietly, almost apologetically service becomes more prominent in *Journey to the East*, a prelude to the final novel where the wider community is more of a concern.

Treating the theme of self-realization in Hesse so often means considering nearly the whole of any single work. It is much the same with this short tale. For some ease in analysis the tale is susceptible of a division into three parts: 1) the idea of the journey to the East and its progress; 2) the failure of the journey; 3) how the journey can be resumed or salvaged.

Under these three pivotal points will be subsumed a number of subsidiary themes such as the relation of the artist and his work, life as a game, the modern world, etc. The three larger hinges of the story are themselves mysterious enough in their presentation to leave the interpreter always in doubt about his reduction of the story to such a scheme. Even more open to ambiguity are the lesser themes if one may be so confident as to think they are truly lesser. The work's symbols are suggestive of a good number of possible interpretations. Such purposely ill-defined language and liquid images render the would-be interpreter's task hazardous and open to dispute. This study cannot hope to satisfy all readers or to unravel all the puzzles. Perhaps no one could do this since many of the allusive images and themes seem to be very private whimsy on Hesse's part, suggesting by their very presence what Leo himself says: life is a game. Finally, whether Hesse himself felt that the whole did hold together well or meant it to, he does give the interpreter an excuse for doubts on this score:

> If I cannot assemble the pictures (of the journey) into a significant whole again, I will present each single fragment as faithfully as possible (page 52).

The Journey

Little of the specificity of a conventional journey adheres to the word as used in Journey to the East. As noted before, it is a journey through time and space by a League itself not limited to any time or any place. It includes a variety of historical and literary figures:

> . . . Zoroaster, Lao Tse, Plato, Xenophon, Pythagoras, Albertus Magnus, Don Quixote, Tristram Shandy, Novalis and Baudelaire were co-founders and brothers of our League (page 55).

All in common are journeying to the East, no matter when, where or how. And what is the East? This Hesse defines:

> For our goal was not only the East, or rather the East was not only a country and something geographical, but it was the home and youth of the soul, it was everywhere and nowhere, it was the union of all times (page 27).

> . . . this procession of believers and disciples had always and incessantly been moving towards the East, towards the Home of Light . . . a wave in the eternal stream of human beings, of the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards the East, towards Home (pages 12, 13).

The pilgrims travel alone or in groups, or either way at various times. They represent the noblest strivings of the human spirit

(Geist) towards enlightenment, wisdom, some final good which might be truth, peace, love, happiness, glory or unity. In its origins the pilgrimage seems to date to the beginnings of human consciousness. It is not identical with any one movement though, as in this work, it may show itself in such a trend as the post-World War I search in Eastern religions and theosophy for some wisdom and security amid the shambles of Western civilization. So it is a universal and timeless quest which may become more pronounced in times of stress and upheaval. But always, in Hesse, it is an individual quest. While the members of the League may appear to have common goals each "carried his own fond childhood dream within his heart as a source of inner strength and comfort" (page 9). H. H.'s dream, one might have guessed after eight novels, would be of the mother, that primeval mother. And that is close. H. H. says his goal was "to see beautiful Princess Fatima and, if possible, to win her love" (page 10). That she is his goal and that he seeks her love gives her the place earlier taken by the mother image. Finally, in a playful allusion he suggests that Fatima and his wife are one and the same:

> I met and loved Ninon, known as "the foreigner." Dark eyes gleamed beneath her black hair. She was jealous of Fatima, the princess of my dreams, and yet she was probably Fatima herself without my knowing it (page 24).
>
> Ich traf und liebte Ninon, als 'die Ausländerin' bekannt, dunkel blickten ihre Augen unter schwarzen Haaren, sie war eifersüchtig auf Fatme, die Prinzessin meines Traumes, und war ja doch wahrscheinlich selber Fatme, ohne es zu wissen (GS, vi, page 22). (Hesse's wife's maiden name was Ninon Ausländer.)

Our last Hessean hero had never quite been able to identify any of his loves with the longed-for mother.

Throughout The Journey to the East there are remarks about other Hessean themes, preoccupations and characters. The latter especially appear in the League itself or are encountered in the course of its travels; among these are Klingsor, Goldmund, Vasudeva, Siddhartha and Pablo. When H. H. consults the League's file on the Princess Fatima his remarks suggest possibly some second-thoughts about the all-preoccupying mother image. In the file, as befits that of a woman, the antipode of the rationality and speech suggested by the man, there is no document but only a locket with her portrait inside. The picture evokes tears of regret in H. H. over the miscarried journey and he thinks:

> Ah, now, I thought, the portrait of the Arabian princess could no longer suffice to act as a charm against the world and hell, and make me into a knight and crusader; I would now need other stronger charms. But how sweet, how innocent, how blissful had been that dream which had haunted my youth, which had made me a story-teller, a musician and a novitiate (sic), and had led me to Morbio (pages 95, 96)!

These lines can be taken as at least a suggestion of H. H.'s turning away from his long obsession with the mother image--'I would now need other stronger charms'-- which had truly "haunted" his youth. In works such as Demian and, more veiled, in Siddhartha and Steppenwolf and very evidently in Narcissus and Goldmund Hesse's journey was to the Urmutter. Hesse's journey to the East is detailed in his many volumes and Journey to the East can be read partly at least as a re-evaluation of his quest.

In the wider sense, as a timeless League of personalities, the League has parallels to such institutions as the Catholic Church and its religious orders or to the rites of Freemasonry. It has a

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novitiate and period of trial (pages 11, 12), a renunciation of the world and its superstitions (page 12), a vow of secrecy (page 19), presiding officials (page 11) and its own judicial system (pages 87 ff). And in Leo as will be clear later, there is a "pope"-like figure who could be described as the servus servorum dei. Other passages too suggest the analogy with Christianity: after the disaster, whatever be its character, at Morbio Inferiore, there is no longer a "center" for the league (page 48); the unity of the community has dissolved and there is wrangling (pages 44 ff) over a document or documents (e.g., the Scriptures) (pages 45 ff); there are doubts and futile arguments (page 112). All of this is applicable, whether Hesse's intention or not, to the Reformation and post-Reformation history of Christianity in the West. To a lesser degree to Buddhist history after the Buddha.

The Fate of the Journey

The progress of the journey is recounted, insofar as H. H.'s memory and understanding allow, and he finds it almost as illusive as the reader does. The League travelers meet trials and temptations along with invitations to join this or that cause, eerie spectres from the past, great men and events of the past. To these latter they do homage and perform reverent rites. A great fete at Bremgarten celebrates great and exotic pilgrims and accomplishments of the past (pages 29 ff). As the pilgrims pass through Swabia and Italy, through various times and climes, they give inspiration and hope to many while giving others the occasion for ridiculing and laughing at such quixotism.

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In their midst is a servant, a volunteer for the journey like all the rest, a young man of pleasant mien named Leo. He sings or whistles as he works and has a manner with animals reminiscent of St. Francis. So unobtrusive is he that he is hardly noticed, rather taken for granted (page 25). When, at the gorge Morbio Inferiore, Leo disappears and the search for him is unavailing the hitherto but slightly remarked servant becomes the catalyst of the League's dissolution (page 37). With his foreboding departure, doubt and despair overcome the pilgrims and the pilgrimage finally breaks up. Later it seems apparent that it was more a case of them deserting Leo, at least on the highest level of the story.

In any event what is most crucial and important is that H. H. faults himself and other members of the League with a failure which can be variously termed failure of nerve, of faith or of confidence, a kind of despair or a lack of vision. This is all quite complex and decidedly ambiguous, open to possibly several interpretations. But a helpful parallel exists in one strain of the Gospel accounts of Jesus and the reactions of his contemporaries to him. He is depicted as coming from God but without exterior fanfare, appearing in the midst of his fellowmen as one who has come to serve; his very unobtrusiveness as a person makes it possible for many to reject his claim to be anything more than an ordinary carpenter's son. Nevertheless this man asks the faith and confidence of his contemporaries. Looking for someone more obviously powerful, politically helpful and showy, they cannot see him as the answer to their needs and refuse him faith. The Gospels speak of the unbelievers often as blind.

Similarly Leo, who, as will be seen more clearly later, represents service, is among the pilgrims, taken for granted, while they search in every imaginable place, experience and movement for the key to life or happiness.

More concretely and specifically, could not Hesse be suggesting--and this is fortified by the changed approach from the earlier works which is visible in the next work, Magister Ludi--that he and all the other questers to some degree have failed by looking too far afield for an answer to the meaning of life and becoming discouraged, even if they have not given in to the pedestrian trust in mere reason and progress? Is not the solution to the question of how to live to be found in the example and life of a Leo, a servant ennobled by his very willing service to others? H. H. has tried the way of solitary isolation in Demian, submersion in reality as in Siddhartha; he has tried to save or realize the self by dissolving it after the fashion of the Steppenwolf Treatise; he has urged strongly that one follow his bent as in Narcissus and Goldmund but has remained unhappy with the limited success that affords. Is the way, then, that of service, of Leo, of his youthful idol, St. Francis of Assisi? The quest remains admirable in its spiritual ideals but has it not lost itself in complex man-made solutions? Leo's explanation of the conduct of H. H. to the assembled elders of the League suggests this:

> The defendant did not know until this hour, or could not really believe, that his apostasy and aberration were a test. For a long time he did not give in. He endured it for many years, knowing nothing about the League, remaining alone, and seeing everything in which he believed in ruins. Finally, he could no longer hide and contain himself. His suffering became too great, and you know that as soon as suffering becomes acute enough, one goes forward. Brother

> H. was led to despair in his test, and despair is the result of each earnest attempt to understand and vindicate human life. Despair is the result of each earnest attempt to go through life with virtue, justice and understanding and to fulfill their requirements. . . . We welcome him anew into the League, the meaning of which he no longer claims to understand. . . . (page 106).

Did the value of all his heroic journeys into the depths of his psyche and into religious thought consist most of all, in true Lutheran fashion, in showing him the impotency of man's attempts at saving himself? Once he no longer "understands" is he not then ready for a new beginning, ready to accept Leo's lesson? But this is running ahead of our procedure.

Back, then to another possible interpretation of the failure of the League members and of H. H. There is the suggestion that the failure of the travelers, and of H. H. lay in doubt that they entertained as to the very possibility of their goal:

> This doubt does not only ask the question, 'Is your story capable of being told?' It also asks the question, 'Was it possible to experience it?' (page 49).

Is the story of H. H. and his fellow failures to be told in the League leader's words occasioned by the early departure of one of their young members?

> We should be happy if he did find his way back to us, but we cannot aid him. He has made it very difficult for himself to have faith again. I fear that he would not see and recognize us even if we passed close by him; he has become blind. Repentance alone does not help. Grace cannot be bought with repentance; it cannot be bought at all. A similar thing has already happened to many other people; great and famous men have shared the same fate as this young man. Once in their youth the light shone for them; then came faint-heartedness and apparent failure. . . (pages 21, 22).

Looked at this way the failure is in a lack of hope and confidence, a lack of trust in the possibility of their goal. The pessimism and despair that occasionally obtrude in Steppenwolf and especially in Narcissus and Goldmund--do they signify faintheartedness, the temptation to surrender the youthful ideal? Are, then, the references to repentance and grace above a confession or admission that the quest cannot be sustained merely by human will and determination? Since this is bound up with faith it may be good to look at the meaning given to Glauben before proceding further.

Faith here carries much of the freight it has in the New Testament save for explicit direction of it to God as its primary object. In other works Hesse has questioned reason in the name of spontaneity and sensuality, instinct, ordinary experience. Now he seems to question it from another direction. The faith he lauds in Journey to the East is: 1) a willingness to go beyond experience, what one hears or may see, to believe and accept as real something beyond the usual so-called reality; to accept, indeed, the possibility of the impossible.

> . . . when we commenced our expedition; then also we undertook something apparently impossible, then also we apparently traveled in the dark, not knowing our direction and not having the slightest prospects. Yet we had within us something stronger than reality or probability, and that was faith in the meaning and necessity of our action (pages 51, 52).

2) Faith goes beyond reason (page 21); it gives a comfort and strength beyond the power of mere facts or the understanding that it may presuppose (page 27). Certain realities, such as the journey, are inaccessible to simple mind; they can only be comprehended with faith (page 97). Despair of reason (in fact) is a necessary prelude to faith. 3) To believe is to have hope for the future (page 40). Willingness to give up the quest is an indication of loss of faith,

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therefore, of loss of hope and confidence.

With this it is possible to return to the alternative explanation of the failure which was begun on page 316. In this case the failure with which H. H. and the others are charged would consist in their losing confidence in their own cause, in its ultimate possibility or likelihood of realization. The culprit here is the idealist who in his youth is ever-ready to charge the steepest heights but who, when faced with bitter reality, retreats and settles for a more contented, well-adjusted existence. Great men, he says, have failed this way because of the pressure of "reason" and the world's mockery. To be every youthfully questing seems foolish to the pedestrian Philistine addicted to common sense and comfort. And, very possibly, maintaining such a quest is beyond merely human strength; it may require something men cannot earn or acquire, grace.

Further light is thrown on the journey and how one could fail in it by 1) Leo's insistence that life is a game and 2) by the emphasis put on certain features of the "journey" that clash with the "best" of bourgeois and technological civilization.

1) When he has rediscovered Leo, H. H. admits to selling his violin, not out of need but emblematic of his despair and disenchantment with his earlier ideals. To Leo this is richly revelatory of H. H.'s state and in what follows he favorably contrasts the young David playing the harp for Saul with the famed king of later years. H. H. misunderstands this to be just a lauding of youth and goes on to say that David too had to eventually realize "Life is not just a game" (page 71). Leo takes a very opposite position:

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> But no account of David can prove to me that life is not just a game. That is just what life is when it is beautiful and happy--a game! Naturally, one can also do all kinds of other things with it, make a duty of it, or a battleground, or a prison, but that does not make it any prettier (page 72).

In all this it may be that Hesse is chiding himself and others for the loss of simplicity in their so-serious probing of the meaning of life. It is somewhat the same teaching that Hermine and Pablo tried to get across to Harry Haller. Hesse's own background may have seen life as a duty; his heroes often have made it a battleground for opposing forces or felt it to be a prison. This insistence on a more artless, detached approach to life is reminiscent of both Taoism (cf. Siddhartha above) and the teaching of Christ: "See the lilies of the field. . . . " Ideally a game represents a joyful exercise of one's powers without much thought of anything beyond the present moment. Hesse had tried to espouse this at times but has probably remained more truly dedicated to the deep concern about self, about salvation in some sense, that typified his Pietist forebears. Too, this insistence that life is a game may be preparing us for the Bead Game.

2) The ideal of the journey to the East has required that the pilgrims renounce "the commonplace aids of modern travel such as railways, steamers, telegraph, automobiles, airplanes, etc" (page 6). The general tendency of technology is a deadening quantification of all of life:

> . . . we lived like pilgrims and made no use of those contrivances which spring into existence in a world deluded by money, number and time, and which drain life of its content. . . (page 13).

For the League, floral festivities, magic, poetry, play are important.

One who rejects the League or, in other words, fails, loses faith, returns to "the railway, common-sense and useful work" (page 19), to "the deserts of mapped out reality" (page 31). In the ordinary world the emphasis is on "getting somewhere," in time, space, social status, economically. All these ideals militate against surrender to the childlike and thoughtless-appearing journey to the East. The journey is, though, ultimately more serious, in the sense that it is concerned with what a man is rather than with what he does or has.

While the writer may be rebuking modern life for the importance it attaches to progress and its achievements, he is not blind to the illusions that may have been involved in the failure of H. H. and company. He may be chiding the pretensions of the literary set. There is the enigmatic section on Leo's luggage or the missing documents. The confusing and extended treatment this incident receives bolsters the impression that it is largely ironic. With Leo's disappearance there comes a mass of speculation about various documents belonging to individuals in the League which apparently disappear with him. What seems to be a purposely teasing treatment includes these conjectures:

> . . . first one man, then another missed something important, something indispensable from the luggage which could not be found anywhere. It appeared that every missing article must have been in Leo's luggage. . . . It seemedthat in this one lost bag there were all the really important things which we carried with us on our journey. . . . the objects that were missing, whether they appeared again later on or not, assumed their importance by degrees, and gradually all the things believed lost, which we had wrongly missed so much and to which we had mistakenly attached so much importance, turned up again in our stores. . . . Quite frankly, it seemed as if each one of us stretched his entire imagination to persuade himself of terrible, irreplaceable losses, as if each one endeavored to conceive as lost that which was most important to him. . . . And although in the end it was clear that one article after the other which was believed lost was either not

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> lost at all or was unimportant or dispensable, there did remain one single thing that was really valuable, an inestimably important, absolutely fundamental and indispensable document that was really indisputably lost. . . . yet how few of us (amongst them myself) could declare with certainty that this document had been taken with us one the journey. . . (pages 41-43).

In the manner of a modern murder mystery, it would be conceivable that one might track down each clue and seek a logical solution here. But the exaggerated language convinces us that is is more ironic. 1) There certainly can be seen here an analogy to the post-Reformation state of Christianity: the disputes about the indispensable Book, the Bible: the breakup of the religion; the attachment to the written word and, in the process, a losing-sight of the founder himself. 2) More specifically this seems to be a parable of one aspect of the failure of H. H. and others in the League. Missing the real point, Leo's identity and meaning, they raise "much ado about nothing." Back on page 7 H. H. had quoted "our wise friend from the East," Siddhartha:

> Words do not express thoughts very well; everything immediately becomes a little different, a little distorted, a little foolish. And yet it also pleases me and seems right that what is of value and wisdom to one man seems nonsense to another.

If words, books, are distorting, then this hullabaloo about the documents is all the more ironic. Hesse seems to be ironically deprecating the value and significance attached to books, literary works, by both their authors and the literary world in general which so often grotesquely proclaims a particular book--to be forgotten shortly--as epochal. May not the disputed documents, missing or not, represent Hesse's own works and those of similar questers to which such importance and careful scrutiny is often given--as in this work? So easily, in the light of further developments or other works or new movements, they seem expendable. Too, may not the great concern about the documents that each esteems so important be a mask or smokescreen to conceal the more serious catastrophe, their failure to recognize the identity or meaning of Leo? If some document actually did disappear with Leo, may it not mean that his meaning (documents, books are in some degree always concerned wit meaning) was hidden from their blindness; that their own preoccupations made it impossible for them to comprehend his significance.

The question arises: if literary works are so expendable, of such limited value, is there any justification for the writing? Hesse in this work which seems so much a review of his own literary history is concerned to answer this. The works have served, if nothing else, a very profound need of the writer. H. H. talks to an old acquaintance Lukas in order to get some help in detailing his account of the journey; at the moment he is stymied by his inability to describe it adequately. Lukas points out that though he himself managed to write a book describing his war experiences, ten better books would never exhaust the subject (page 57). He was impelled to write it out of desperation:

> It was only possible for me to do it, he said, because it was necessary. I either had to write the book or be reduced to despair; it was the only means of saving me from nothingness, chaos and suicide. . . . (page 57).

Similarly Hesse (H. H.) has only been able to detail his journey, *Demian*, *Siddhartha*, *Steppenwolf*, *Narcissus and Goldmund* and all the others--in one sense a "noble cause"--for a similar reason:

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> . . . but I see more and more that in the description of my journey I am only aiming at the same thing as Mr. Lukas with his war-book; namely, at saving my life by giving it meaning again (page 62).

Journey to the East, no matter what else it is, is something of an evaluation and justification of Hesse's own literary journey, a journey into the artist's interior, with some suggestion of what is to come. Like Siddhartha, the writer could never just accept any one teacher or philosophy, Christ, the Buddha, Tao; he had to try for himself. He had to experience for himself reality and all its ways to self-understanding. His works are a monument to his unremitting probing, fortunately therapeutic for himself and encouraging to his readers.

Salvaging the Journey

H. H.'s restoration, the resumption of the journey, some solution to the failure which occurred in the journey, is offered largely in the person of the young man servant, Leo. He is enthusiastic and musical (page 39), faithful (page 37), handsome, pleasant and willing (dienstwilligen, GS, vi, page 29) (page 39). The servant of the early part of the story appears later as the master, the president of the League. His own remarks about service plus the details given later strongly suggest an illustration in him of any number of Scriptural sayings and concepts; e.g., "The son of man has come not to be served, but to serve. . . ."; "Let him among you who would be first become the last. . . ." There is the incident of Christ's washing the feet of his disciples, performing a servant's work. There are the Servant of the Lord songs in Isaiah. There is St. Paul's doctrine that the son of God emptied himself and took on the form of a servant.

In other words, much of what Leo illustrates is also of the essence of the Biblical conception of the character of the Christ.

Service, the status of servant, this is the essential about Leo that is available. A conversation between him and H. H. about artists (including writers) and their creations elicits a little more information. At the great Bremgarten festival H. H. is impressed with how much more "animated, beautiful, happier and certainly finer and more real" are the imaginary characters of artists than the artists themselves. He asks Leo why this is so. Leo responds:

> It is just the same with mothers. When they have borne their children and given them their milk and beauty and strength, they themselves become invisible and no one asks about them any more.
>
> . . . .
>
> Perhaps it is sad and yet also beautiful. The law ordains that it shall be so.
>
> . . . .
>
> The law of service. He who wishes to live long must serve, but he who wishes to rules does not live long.
>
> . . . .
>
> There are few who are born to be masters; they remain happy and healthy. But all the others who have only become masters through endeavor, end in nothing. . . . for example, in the sanitoria (pages 34, 35).

Serving, surrender of one's self to others, to something better, is the way to happiness, long life. The go-getters, the ambitious, the aggressive end in nothing, in sanitoria. It has been noted several times earlier that Journey to the East seems to mark a re-evaluation of past work and a new orientation toward the future. The teaching just proposed by Leo, for instance, is quite far from the injunction to make yourself, and preferably in the manner of a superman, the ideal which prevailed in Demian. The idea that the creator or artist should disappear or become invisible in the creation is returned to near the end when H. H. has come on the strange two-faced statue of himself and Leo (pages 117, 118). As he looks at the figurine with the help of candles on each side, his own image melts into that of Leo so that one remains, that of Leo. "He must grow, I must disappear" (page 118). And he recalls the earlier conversation at Bremgarten.

Taking this autobiographically, as seems appropriate, Hesse is noting how attractive and ideal are some of his creations compared to his self-evaluation. Leo agrees it must be so; like a mother the artist gives birth to more vital creatures than himself. This itself is a kind of self-emptying of which there were hints in Goldmund's feelings after finishing a work of art. The self-emptying proposed here, though is the kind portrayed in the merging of the two faces of the statue. Leo, the representative of willing service and surrender is what he, H. H., Hermann Hesse, must become. Implicitly one may read here a negative judgment on the part of the author towards his earlier and more narcissistic preoccupations, his efforts at self-realization, self-definition, self-affirmation. Greater than any of these would be his giving himself to service, to a Leo-life. To be sure, this is not entirely at variance with earlier solutions of Hesse: the Steppenwolf was taught at one time to lose himself in Brahman and he would find his better self realized. This is similar; Hesse's better self, Leo, will be realized, will become dominant if he will give into the law of service, make that his controlling norm. Again this is related to the favored doctrine of the two selves, the empirical ego and the true, eternal self hidden within. Hesse seems to be saying that the real self is realized when a man takes the path of service as the all determining norm for his life. He is once again a true member of the League.

Is it sufficient to say that Andreas Leo is H. H.'s better, true self? For an adequate understanding of the tale this does seem sufficient. Yet there are so many teasing suggestions of a more specific identity for him that a few words must be said about this here. Earlier (above, page 323) some indications were given of the obvious similarity between the essence of Leo and that of Christ's teaching. On page 314 some remarks noted the similarity between Christ's and Leo's reception by their public: in each case an ordinary, even lowly, human appearance made them nearly invisible to the eyes of the seekers around them. Leo is addressed by H. H. in words used by the ill to Christ in the Gospels and frequently in Christian liturgies: "have pity on me" (page 72) (erbarmen Sie sich! , GS, vi, page 49). The name Leo means lion and in the zodiac is the sign of the most divine and brilliant of celestial bodies, the sun. In much traditional liturgical literature Christ is referred to as the Sun or the Sun of Justice and, with reference to the Old Testament, as the Lion of Judah. The first name Andreas, Andrew in English, is from the Greek for man. The term Son of Man, used often of Jesus, is a Hebrew manner of saying a human being, a man. This could suggest that Andreas Leo is the ideal man or also, joined with the meaning of Leo, suggest the two natures of man and God united, according to traditional theology, in the one person of the Christ. Jung, whose teachings undoubtedly reached Hesse at least through Dr. Lang, ways: "Christ exemplifies the archetype of the self" for Western man.[8] So there are reasons for thinking that Leo might represent Christ for H. H., to Hesse. Colleville quotes a letter of Hesse's in which Hesse says that he considers himself almost, nearly, practically (nahezu) a Christian.[9] Against this, of course, can be adduced Hesse's well-documented eclecticism.

Leo's great familiarity with animals, the fact that they are attracted to him, that he really communicates with them, suggests an idol of Hesse's earlier days about whom he once wrote, St. Francis of Assisi. The recovery of such a paradisiacal unity with the animal creation is a standard element in the Franciscan legend. It is also, however, very consonant with the Taoist ideal of harmony with all that is, an ideal reflected in Hesse's works.

All in all, it is probably best to see Leo as H. H.'s better or true self, a self fashioned or modeled undoubtedly by Hesse's wide acquaintance with the religious literature of both East and West.

After this brief halt at Bremgarten, Seilergraben and other places to celebrate and review the past with its failures and successes and provided with new courage and strength for the future, the Hessean journey to the East can continue. Hesse has reaffirmed: the validity of his and mankind's quest for true selfhood and happiness; his rejection of the world of money, number and time; the primacy of the intuitive mind or spirit and imagination over the analytic and quantifying mentality; the necessity for confident, hopeful new beginnings. He has added the note of willing service as the way to true selfhood, something of a departure except for rather undeveloped reference to this in Siddhartha. And finally, he has made light of his own and others' intellectual and literary achievements as possibly over-valued, as in any case psychological needs of the author, paling beside the life of a Leo, the life of service.

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[8] Psyche and Symbol, p. 36.

[9] "Le problème religieux dans le vie et l'oeuvre de Hermann Hesse," pp. 138, 139.

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III. Magister Ludi

Summary

The anonymous chronicler of the life of Joseph Knecht writes around the year 2400 AD about his subject who lived presumably two centuries earlier.[10] He writes from a province called Castalia, part of a country existing at this time somewhere in the Swiss-German area of Europe. Castalia is a province hallowed by the existence within it of the Vicus Lusorum where the international Bead Game is centered. The dedicated followers of the Bead Game form an order analogous to religious orders of today. Joseph Knecht in his mature years holds the post that gives the book its English title, master of the game, Magister Ludi, a post below that of the head of the order in the hierarchy but nevertheless probably the next most estimable position. The intricate and esoteric Bead Game attempts to unify and harmonize all the elements of human culture in some lofty mathematical and musical synthesis played on a type of bead game apparatus. Because of its aim it is naturally extremely complex and is in reality for its devoted practitioners a kind of religion and art at one and the same time. The writer recounts the origins of the Bead Game in our own time or near it in a world exhausted by war and disintegrated in culture and spirit. It is an age of supercilious learning and much technical achievement but an age lacking a center, vision or purpose. In an effort to arrest this disintegration the Bead Game arose. At the time of Knecht the Game itself was already in danger of dissolution and decadence, unknown to most of its devotees. It had become a matter of technical virtuosity lacking spirit and providing its followers with a lofty occupation quite detached from the concerns and needs of the real world outside its monastic enclosure.

Chapter I The Call

All that is known of Knecht's childhood is that as a young student in school in Berolfingen he is singled out for an audience with the venerated Magister Musicae of Castalia. The Music Master is highly pleased with Knecht's musicianship (on the violin) and invites him to one of the elite schools of Castalia for further education. Knecht recognizes in this a call, an awakening such as he will experience again and again in his life, a happy coincidence of inner premonitions and outward circumstances. He goes to the school at Eschholz, itself a sequestered type of institution. Here Knecht feels his first slight qualms about this cloistered life and realizes that some of those who leave are not necessarily disgraced but may be making a "leap" forward. The Music Master begins Knecht's instruction in meditation with the help of music.

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[10] Hermann Hesse, Magister Ludi, trans. Mervyn Savill (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1949). References to this novel in this chapter will henceforth be given in the text thus: (page___). The original German of this novel is found in Gesammelte Schriften, volume vi. References to the German will be given in the text thus: (GS, vi, page___).

Chapter II Waldzell

Knecht graduates from Eschholz to another school of the order, Waldzell, which educates specialists in the Bead Game to which he is attracted. Waldzell is also noted for its music, another of his prime interests, and is the home of the Bead Game and of the Magister Ludi. The school is situated in the buildings of an ancient Cistercian monastery (as was Hesse's own Maulbronn). Here Knecht is systematically taught the meditation which is so intrinsic to the life of Castalia. Among Knecht's fellow students not all are destined for the Bead Game and the order. One such outsider is Plinio Designori, the scion of an aristocratic family prominent in government. Designori with great relish and talent attacks the life of the Castalians as sterile and one-sided. This disturbs Knecht greatly but he is entrusted with Castalia's defense. He does this well while understanding the validity of some of Designori's objections. Their interchange makes them friends and confirms Knecht's dedication to Castalia and its life; this is in the nature of another call. Designori soon finishes his education and returns to the life of the extra-Castalian world.

Chapter III Apprenticeship

After his formal studies Knecht has a period of "free study" which he devotes to his great love, music, and an analysis of the Bead Game. This latter is a sort of seeing for himself what it means, a task which disturbs some of the community. He makes a retreat during this time at the "Bamboo Grove" with an elderly sage, the Elder Brother, well versed in Chinese wisdom, especially that of the I Ching.

Designori returns to Castalia for a visit and it brings about a painful reunion with Knecht; the two have moved further apart in life-styles and ambitions. Knecht is received into the order on the Music Master's recommendation and shortly after is sent to the Benedictine monastery of Mariafels ostensibly to teach some of that community more about the Bead Game.

Chapter IV Two Orders

Less obviously Knecht has a political mission: to gain the help of the abbey in establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between Castalia and the Vatican. Among the Benedictines he meets a Father Jacobus, a distinguished historian of the order and a musician. They develop a close and congenial relationship. Knecht feels he is there not only to teach but to learn. Father Jacobus' strictures on Castalia's irreligion and withdrawal from human history lead Knecht once again to some critical thinking about it. Especially does he benefit from the Benedictine by learning the importance of world history and historical perspective, something Castalia proudly disdains. This is in the nature of another awakening for Knecht.

Chapter V The Mission

Knecht receives orders for a vacation in Waldzell. While there he is given explicit orders about his diplomatic mission which, due to his winning over of Father Jacobus to some understanding of Castalia, is ultimately successfu. Back at Mariafels Knecht, from a distance, participates in a Bead Game competition and wins first prize, significant of the retention of his skill in the Game.

Chapter VI Magister Ludi

Knecht returns to the Vicus Lusorum for the annual public solemnity of the Bead Game, an international affair. The current Magister Ludi, Thomas, is ill and his deputy Bertram must conduct the festival. Bertram lacks self-confidence and the trust of his peers; the ensuing festival, consequently, is a "joyless, luckless" proceding. The Magister Ludi dies and Knecht is soon chosen the new Magister Ludi. This he had sensed would be his destiny and he performs his functions without reproach. He gains the confidence and cooperation of the elite, a sort of intellectual cream of the community with a tendency to arrogance. With their cooperation things can go smoothly.

Chapter VII In Office

In office, Knecht, largely because of his extra-Castalian contacts with men such as Designori and Jacobus, becomes more conscious of the decline of Castalia and of his own attraction to teaching youth, young children, something he is not free to do. Faithful to his office, with the help of his friend Fritz Tegularius, he prepares for the next public game.

He visits the now ailing Music Master and finds him to be what he terms a saint. He has become a serene, untroubled old man easily letting go of the world around him while apparently envisioning the ultimate harmony.

Knecht leads successfully the first public game of his career.

Chapter VIII The Two Poles

This chapter is in the nature of a disquisition on the polarities in Knecht's character, his tendency to want to preserve and better Castalia and his awareness of its deficiencies, his dedication to its ideal and his own centrifugal inclination. His talented but neurasthenic friend Tegularius well represents the dangers of Castalian life: intellect minus commitment to the larger world and mankind.

Chapter IX A Conversation

Now some years as Magister Ludi and around forty years of age, Knecht is weary of his office. Designori rather providentially arrives at Castalia for a business meeting. He and Knecht have a

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much more congenial, if troubled, meeting this time; it is opportune for both. Designori is unhappy with many elements of his life and feels estranged from the world he lives in and from Castalia. Furthermore, as has been noted, the Magister Ludi is re-evaluating his life and his relation to Castalia and the wider world.

Chapter X Preparations

Designori recounts the history of his problems: disagreement with his father, family problems and an insubordinate son, Tito. Knecht tells Designori that he plans to lay down his office and enter the world outside. By way of preparing for this Knecht makes several visits to Designori's home. He sets Fritz Tegularius to work researching and writing his departing apologia, a way of keeping the volatile friend from histrionics. Knecht wins over Designori's wife and plans are made for him to take over the tutoring of Tito when he leaves Castalia.

Chapter XI The Circular Letter

This chapter is largely devoted to reprinting the letter Knecht finally sends to the Pedagogy, a sort of ruling board to which he is answerable. He tells its members that the Bead Game and life in Castalia are in danger of sterility and general decline, that it is narrow and too closed to history and men. He is resigning his office. The letter is more in the nature of an exercise for Tegularius than anything from which Knecht expects positive results. The Pedagogy rejects his request, disdainfully acknowledging a slight plausibility in some of his arguments while rejecting the substance. They maintain their aloofness and rebuke Knecth's wilfullness and unaccountable concern with his own development.

Chapter XII The Legend

The Legend in the title refers to the fact that the matter here given circulated in this form among the members of the order after Knecht's departure.

In order to be humane Knecht goes to the head of the order, Alexander to attempt to justify once more his departure and to hand over the insignia of office. Alexander cannot understand Knecht's behavior except as a personal aberration, a failure as a Castalian, a surrender to personal feelings and desires. Somewhat saddened but not disheartened Knecht takes leave for Designori's.

On arrival at the Designori house Knecht finds that Tito has apparently absconded. But a note discovered in his room soon assures them that he has gone on ahead by himself to Belpunt, the mountain retreat where he and Knecht are to live. Knecht follows the next day and arrives suffering a bit from the unaccustomed heights.

The next morning the two go out to the cold mountain lake where Tito unexpectedly breaks into a spontaneous dance to the sunrise and his new life. Embarrassed, finally he plunges into the

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lake to swim to the other side urging Knecht to follow. Disregarding his indisposition and age, Knecht feels he must follow. He does and soon drowns in the icy water. Tito searches in vain for him and is crushed by the weight of his guilt. This guilt will make even greater demands on him than would his planned education.

Posthumous Writings

Poetic Fragments

Contrary to Castalian practice, which rejects musical composition and the writing of poetry, Knecht had been led at times to write some verses and they are printed here. They reflect life in Castalia, the Bead Game and Knecht's ambivalent relationship to these. Closest to an actual motto for Knecht himself are lines in one of the poems entitled *Steps*.

> At life's each call the heart must be prepared
> to take its leave and to commence afresh,
> courageously and with no hint of grief
> submit itself to other, newer ties.
> A magic dwells in each beginning and
> protecting us it tells us how to live. (page 396)

The Three Incarnations

Following the poetic fragments among Knecht's literary remains are three fictional lives (*Die Drei Lebensläufe*, *GS*, vi, page 557) called *Incarnations* in the English translation.[11] Unlike the poems above, these were officially sanctioned, even commissioned, during the free study years. Graduates of the schools were asked occasionally to write a "fictitious autobiography, laid in a favorite period of the past" (page 103). In a sense Hesse's own literary history is a succession of such efforts: it was Hesse who took on the disguise of a contemporary of Buddha in *Siddhartha* and again depicted his inner polarities in *Narcissus and Goldmund* in the setting of medieval times; similarly, though it would not fulfill the definition of a "favorite period" it was Hesse again whose incarnation was visible in the Steppenwolf. The three incarnations written by Knecht served, as they did for other students, to assist in the discovery of other cultures, to indulge youthful wish-dreams and to aid in self-knowledge.

> We possess three such incarnations written by Joseph Knecht, which we have reproduced word for word at the end of this book, and which we consider perhaps to be the most valuable part of our study (page 105).

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[11] At the time of their composition they are termed incarnations: "Es lebte ein Rest des alten asiatischen Wiedergeburts-und Seelenwanderungsglaubens in dieser freien und spielerischen Form hier fort; . . . " (GS, vi, page 191).

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The three are entitled: "The Rainmaker," "The Father Confessor" and "The Indian Life." The three Incarnations will be treated as having some relation to three divisions of Knecht's life and will be summarized in the appropriate places (See Mileck, page 110).

Magister Ludi in Hesse's Literary History and Life

In 1943, the same year in which Hesse's name almost made the Nazi blacklist, Das Glasperlenspiel was published after more then ten years of work. Fulfilling the augury of Journey to the East (the opening page of Magister Ludi bears the dedication: For the Eastern Wayfarers), this last large fiction work of Hesse's has the appearance of being much less preoccupied with the self and its tensions than was true in most of the preceding novels. Magister Ludi is less self-conscious and more concerned with form, especially with the Bead Game itself, and the ideal of service toward which Leo of the Journey to the East was pointing. This latter theme may surpass self-realization in importance here or, at least, be more intrinsic to self-realization than was apparent in the books of Hesse's earlier periods.

The turbulence of Steppenwolf is missing as is the electric tension of Narcissus and Goldmund. Contemplation, meditation and a resultant serenity (Heiterkeit) typify Knecht's ambiance. The wisdom of China and the spirit of the classical composers (Purcell, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Froberger, Mozart) reinforce this contemplative and harmonious spirit. The intended transcendence of the inner, personal struggle and concerns is exemplified well in the cool, detached, even rarefied style employed through much of the book by Knecht's

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Castalian successors in describing the life of this onetime Magister Ludi and also in the fact that in terms of volume so much of the novel is concerned with Castalia rather than with Knecht.

Form

All of the book, except for Knecht's literary fragments and his letter of resignation, is written in an elevated style reflecting the somewhat over-serious and self-conscious effort of the writer to faithfully embody a Castalian transcendence of personality-cult (pages 14, 15). Since Hesse's hero, Joseph Knecht, is to some degree "unfaithful" to the ideal of anonymity and identification with Castalia, the general style of the work becomes ironic. This detached and lofty manner of narration is consonant with the mathematically-ordered character of the Bead Game which is omnipresent. In many ways the three lives at the end are the most attractive and truly fictional appearing elements in the work.

Joseph Mileck in his survey of studies relevant to Magister Ludi presents well the difficulties of defining with any precision the specific literary character of the work (Mileck, pages 189 ff). Most analogies and conventional categories help little in describing a work which customarily evokes such epithets as "odd," "strange," and "enigmatic." For some it may be of help to know that it has tenuous connections with Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, especially with the idea of a "pedagogical province" found there. In general, for readers of Hesse's earlier novels, the effort here to evoke in style and vocabulary the rarefied and intellectual atmosphere of Castalia and the Bead Game is ingenious but not likely to really charm. However, with all this genuine abstruseness and its suggestions of classic objectivity, Magister Ludi remains, as befits Hesse,

> romantic in its loose composition, in its fragmentary nature, in the naïveté of its idyllic setting, and in its efforts to give symbolic expression to the otherwise inexpressible. It is romantic in its dream, the glass-bead game with its idea of universal harmony (Mileck, page 29).

The Lebensläufe will be used as a framework for a consideration of what Joseph Knecht's life may signify in regard to Hesse's lifelong quest. In doing so, they are regarded as foreshadowing to some degree the three phases of Knecht's life. While using them as this sort of framework attention will also be given to the agency of Knecht's various friends in his awakening to the nature of his true self and destiny. Especially to be considered are the Music Master, the Elder Brother, Father Jacobus, Tegularius and Designori. Knecht's awakening to his self-hood, in the context of Castalia, is an incipient disloyalty to the spirit of the province though the latter retains his esteem (See pages 14-15).

The First Incarnation--The Rainmaker--and the First Phase of Knecht's Life

This first story is set in a primitive matriarchate where the young orphan Knecht lives. Outside of the women who are the important members of the society there is at least one significant male, the Rainmaker Turu. With difficulty Knecht succeeds in being accepted by Turu as an apprentice and eventually marries Turu's daughter Ada. Turu dies, leaving his office to Knecht.

Knecht weathers the kinds of crises a Rainmaker would have to face such as drought and poor crops. He accepts an importuning apprentice named Maro who must soon be dismissed as a "brilliant pupil who cannot serve" (page 424). Shortly after, strange occurences, castastrophe in the form of hot, burning stones from the sky, cause panic in the village. A bad spring of drought and ineffectual sowing follows and Knecht offers himself, as the Rainmaker should, as a sacrifice for the community's good. He

> suggests that Maro do the slaying but the latter cannot bring himself to wield the death-dealing axe and another does it. Knecht leaves a son Turu behind as the new Rainmaker.

In the "Rainmaker Life" and Knecht's own life the essential point of comparison or prediction concerns the attraction of a young boy to the ideal embodied in an older man, an ideal of service to a community. The primitive Knecht of "The Rainmaker" is awed and fascinated by Turu who lives in such close communion with nature and to some degree understands how she acts. His persistent interest finally evokes a positive response from Turu. For the small boy Joseph Knecht, a grammar student at Berolfingen, his attraction to a specific future is awakened by the visit there of the Magister Musicae, a most "fabulous and mysterious" personage in the life of Castalia (page 47). This "demi-god" awakens Joseph to the profound interest in music which marks his life. Music, in the person of the Music Master, represents a communion with all that is and a harmonious living with all. Knecht's inner drive toward music is encouraged and ratified by the "blessing" of this adept, the exalted Music Master. This is one of the "calls" around which Hesse builds much of the life of Joseph Knecht:

> There are many different varieties and forms of 'call' but the kernel and meaning of the event are always the same. The soul becomes awakened, so that inner dreams and premonitions are suddenly replaced by a summons from without, and a fragment of reality is found to exist and comes into play (page 54).

If the matriarchate is the background of "The Rainmaker" possibly music is to be the background of the first part and, indeed, of all Knecht's life; at least, music often is identified with the qualities of the mother (feeling, sensitivity, sense, intuition) in Hesse. Music is to be central to the Bead Game or, rather, to share central position with mathematics which expresses the father principle. Music, indeed, may have the last word in this novel.

Eventually, again parallel to events in "The Rainmaker," Knecht commits himself to the life of the order, of the Bead Game, and even to the exalted position of Magister Ludi in a manner analogous to the Rainmaker's commitment in that more primitive community.

The Music Master

Similar to the situation with Turu is Knecht's relationship to the Music Master as a "son taking my place" (page 130). Like Turu the Music Master embodies an ideal not limited to his "profession" or specialty, music, but also shaping his character and personality. He evinces a kind of sanctity, self-affirmation, which will evoke Knecht's veneration well into his mature life. He certainly encourages Knecht's devotion to the ideal of Castalia and the Bead Game but at the same time plants the seeds, wittingly or not, of Knecht's eventual dissatisfaction with that ideal. He notes in Knecht a desire for a comprehensive, intellectually satisfying, all-encompassing doctrine, "something in which one could believe," and tells him:

> Yes, there is truth, my dear boy, . . . But the doctrine that you desire, the absolute, perfect, comprehensive and instructive doctrine, does not exist. You should not yearn for this, my friend, but only for self-perfection. (nach Vervollkommnung deiner selbst, GS, vi, page 157). The Godhead is in yourself, not in theories and in books. Truth must be lived, not taught. Prepare yourself for your conflict, Joseph Knecht, for I see that it has already begun (pages 76-77).

The Bead Game, whatever its facility for harmonizing the polarities of human knowledge, is not adequate to the richness and intractability of that reality. Too, Castalia's ideal of impersonality and anonymity is implicitly in contradiction with the old Hessean theme brought up by the Music Master. As Knecht will note critically later on, the Game, especially in his time, was going through a degeneration in which virtuosity tended to become more important than wisdom. The Music Master seeks to help Knecht avoid this pitfall by seconding his devotion to music and teaching him "meditation to music," a means to permeation by the serene spirit of great music (page 72).

Other personal influences leave their mark on the maturing Knecht as he moves towards the post of Magister Ludi, a destiny he dimly perceives: the Elder Brother, Father Jacobus, Fritz Tegularius and Plinio Designori.

The Elder Brother

The first of these constitutes an interlude the effect of which persists in Knecht's ultimate ideal of serenity. This Elder Brother (a nickname) contributes to the Taoist ingredient operative in this ideal and reflects Hesse's debt to and predilection for Chinese thought. This interlude takes place in Knecht's "post-graduate" days during a time when he already senses the impending burden of the post of Magister Ludi in the expectations of his peers and feels a concomitant need for withdrawal. His retreat is with a former student of Chinese in the Castalian college of Sinology who lives as a hermit steeped in the wisdom of the I Ching and Chuang Tzu. Studies at the Chinese college had been too rationalist, too based on Confucius, for the Elder

Brother. Here again is a parallel to the direction already given Knecht by the Music Master's implicit critique of the Castalian ideal and Knecht's absorption in it. Like the Music Master, the Elder Brother is warning Knecht of the danger of pedanticism in the cult of the Bead Game.

The over all effect of his stay with the Elder Brother studying the I Ching and its oracles and Chuang Tzu is another sort of awakening in Knecht continuous with the call mentioned earlier but bringing him nearer to his eventual fate or destiny:

> We must presume that 'awakening' means a realization at that time of his own self, and of the position in which he stood within the Castalian and the human scheme, and yet the accent seems to us to be laid more and more upon self-realization (Selbsterkenntnis, GS, vi, page 212) in the sense that Knecht, from 'the beginning of his awakening,' was approaching nearer and nearer to a feeling of his own particular position and vocation (Bestimmung, GS, vi, page 212), whereas the concepts and the categories of a general and special position attainable within the Castalian hierarchy became for him ever more relative (page 121).

In entering the Castalian order Joseph Knecht has dedicated himself to a wider life than his private life. Concomitantly with his closer association with the elite intellectual community come influences destined actually to subvert the order's ideal of anonymity. While the ideal is not "the extinction of the individual" it is "the most perfect absorption (Einordnen, GS, vi, page 80) of the individual in the hierarchy of 'the pedagogy' and of science. . . ." (page 14). The Music Master's teaching about self-realization was noted above; now the Elder Brother too, an eccentric by Castalian standards, encourages Knecht's awakening more and more to his own peculair vocation by condoning and abetting a critique of Castalia.

Father Jacobus

A third "subverter" of Castalian ideals, one initially very hostile to Castalia, is in the wings, Father Jacobus, the Benedictine. Within a very short time of his formal admittance into the order Knecht is charged with a mission to the Benedictine monastery of Mariafels, a community which like its parent Roman Church has weathered and survived the upheavals of the preceding centuries.

Running along with the influence of men such as Father Jacobus is, it must not be forgotten, Knecht's fulfillment of the ideal of service--foreshadowed in the dedication of Turu to the good of his community--service primarily, in this early stage, to the ideals, the Bead Game and intellect, and the community of Castalia. A tension develops between the Castalian ideal and Knecht's personal path but neither is denied outright. This is clearly illustrated in his acceptance of the mission to the Benedictines, a responsibility laid on him despite his own desire to continue his studies and lead the more ordinary life of a member of the organization. He accepts a type of death to self for the community. Again, as when at the elite school as a younger man, he sees that his call to this particular mission carries with it an abridgement of his freedom and portents of a rise in the hierarchy--forces driving in a direction opposed to that encouraged innocently by the Music Master, more forthrightly by the Elder Brother and also to be abetted by Father Jacobus.

The teachings of the Music Master and the Elder Brother, at least as absorbed by Knecht, fuel the fires of his individuality vis-a-vis Castalia. Father Jacobus drives Knecht to question

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fundamentally the orientation of the intellectual province, its isolation from world history. Indeed, this had been begun earlier by Knecht's classmate Plinio Designori about whom more later. Broad diplomatic and cultural implications are attached to Knecht's mission to Mariafels but the more personal significance of the interlude for Knecht is the concern here. Father Jacobus is a well-known historian, apparently modeled on the illustrious Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt whom Hesse admired deeply, an admiration shared by Nietzsche. Further, amid the less intellectually intense Benedictines Father Jacobus is the most outstanding intellect and scholar. Basically he is antagonistic to what he considers Castalia's lack of religion and is only gradually won to a more favorable estimation. He and Knecht share an interest in music; both are muscians and likewise have in common a rather esoteric interest in a Swabian Pietist Albrecht Bengel.

Most directly and without all the detail that is available Knecht himself describes the effect of Father Jacobus on him in his final apologia-conversation with the head of the province Alexander. He says:

> . . . I discovered during the course of my instruction with Father Jacobus that I was not only a Castalian but also a man and that the whole world affected me and made demands upon me as a fellow human being. . . . (page 360).
>
> My teacher Jacobus had awakened in me a love for this world, which waxed continually and sought for nourishment but there was nothing in Castalia that it could feed upon for here one was outside the world and was oneself a little perfect, static, sterile world (page 361).

The world of Castalia seems to him, by contrast to the world outside, "a land almost without a history, a province of scholars and bead-

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players, a highly cultured and highly agreeable society but one in which my curiosity about the world, and my compassion for it seemed to be unique" (page 360). He had graduated from a view of the world outside as coarse and disorderly, passionate and diffuse, to an estimation of it as also rich and "pregnant with future, history, efforts and eternal new beginnings" (page 360), the "homeland and mother soil" of arts, humanity, peoples, languages, etc. and even of Castalia itself (page 361).

This last comment attests to Hesse's own basically conservative attitude regarding culture and civilization; he sees it all as a continuum from which no man and no institution can utterly detach himself or itself. Only by a sort of blindness could Knecht or Castalia sever themselves from history and the life of mankind in general. Appropriately the lesson comes from a Benedictine, a member of a basically contemplative order which, however, historically involved itself, from the start, in educational and missionary enterprises, i.e., in history.

Tegularius

> We are of the opinion that this Tegularius was no less necessary in Knecht's life than Designori and the Benedictine Father had been and that, like these two, he was an awakening influence, a casement opening on to new horizons (page 244).

So writes Knecht's chronicler of his faithful friend, Fritz Tegularius. Their friendship throughout, from its beginning in their student days to the very end, is somewhat unbalanced, insofar as it is a deeper necessity for Tegularius than for Knecht; the former's ardent and intense nature requires someone like Knecht to admire and love.

Knecht himself is more self-sufficient and aloof, able to adapt himself to a variety of situations and to find sufficient companionship in new friends. As a very minimum this obvious attraction of Tegularius for himself makes Knecht aware of his power over men and ability to lead. He knows:

> that the one-sidedness and exclusiveness of the love which Tegularius bore him was not only beautiful but possessed a certain ingenuous quality and dangerous charm, which tempted him on occasions to exercise his power over one who was weaker in strength but stronger in love (page 138).

Essentially, to leave aside for the moment a number of nuances, Tegularius awakens or appeals to the individualist in Knecht and is, really, a parody of this attitude, an extreme or excess which even Knecht in his own criticism of Castalia still finds such. The individualism and non-conformity of the brilliant Tegularius has some appeal for Knecht but the latter balances this with an abiding concern for the community, Castalia, which recognizes a danger in such individuals. Knecht's own course of action in ultimately leaving Castalia will have something of the individualist in it but still be influenced by broader concerns: the good of the world outside, and the salvation of Castalia from its own self-concentration and unreal existence.

It is possible to see a foreshadowing of the character and personality of Tegularius in the difficult apprentice, Maro, whom the Rainmaker Knecht accepts in that Incarnation. Explaining his decision to release or dismiss Maro from his service Knecht speaks of brilliance unmatched by reverence and spiritual depth. Not all of this is totally true of Tegularius but he does seem to be the type who may "shine" but is not fundamentally capable of service" (page 424). Such should not be promoted, Knecht the Rainmaker says.

Knecht the Magister in his secret report on Tegularius writes:

> . . . The most talented and brilliant Bead Game player that I know. He would be an obvious choice for Magister Ludi were not his character completely unsuited to this post on account of his delicate health. Tegularius should never be allowed to attain a leading representative or administrative position. . . . (page 133).

Elsewhere the chronicler of Knecht's life writes of Tegularius as "arch-Castalian" in his assimilation of the culture of the province and his intimacy with the Bead Game and yet so unacceptable to his colleagues for reasons similar to those delineated by Knecht:

> His malady was primarily a failing of character, what one might have called a depraved capacity for insubordination; in the deepest sense he was totally unhierarchical and individualistic in outlook and mode of life. . . . His greatest vice was an incorrigible casualness and a neglectful attitude towards his meditation, the intention of which is the subjugation of the individual. . . . (page 243).

Though Knecht himself is not entirely immune to Tegularius' affection he remains objective enough to see that his difficult friend is both a reproach and a warning to Castalia. Tegularius is ever ready to continue his lone path and to flout the authority of the order at the expense of peace of mind (page 244); he is a virtuoso in the Game but lacks the spirit of the community. He is simultaneously "the embodiment of the highest Castalian capacities and the admonitory sign of its demoralisation and decline" (page 245). A whole set of Tegulariuses, and such--minus the latter's brilliance--might be the future of Castalia, would spell the disintegration of the province.

The attraction Knecht feels for this friend sharpens his own determination to realize his own self and its convictions, yet this

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never reaches the point where he desires the destruction of Castalia. Rather, while feeling himself compelled to leave it, he remains solicitous that it learn and be itself saved from degeneration and its own egocentricity. To one as thoroughly imbued as Knecht has been with the spirit of Castalia and subordination of self to its aims, Tegularius demonstrates the possibility of an entirely different life-style, that of the non-conforming, rebellious individual.

In this first phase of Knecht's life, prefigured by the story of Knecht the Rainmaker, Knecht has passed from student in the Castalia schools to adept at the Bead Game and entrance into the order and, finally, to his extraordinary mission at Mariafels. This segment of his life ends after a dismal annual Game presided over by the ailing Magister's deputy Bertram. Soon Knecht is invested as Magister Ludi, fulfilling the fears and premonitions of earlier years. Adroitly and competently he wins over the various groups with whom he must work; impeccably performs his office and eschews intimate friendships as prescribed. Yet, within a few years of his attainment of such competence and authority in his position he grows weary of his office and, the chronicler says:

> . . . had already turned his face towards other goals. He had exhausted the full circle of possibilities and whatever scope for development this office had held out to him and had reached the point where great natures abandon the way of tradition and obedient compliance and with confidence in higher, unnamed powers feel themselves obliged to attempt and make themselves responsible for the new, the uncharted and the unknown (page 258).

The Second Incarnation--The Father Confessor

The setting is the Egyptian desert in the time of the great desert hermits. Knecht depicts himself in this story as Joseph

> Famulus, famulus, the Latin for Knecht, servant. He is a late convert and now an ascetic desert hermit and penitent to whom many come for solace in their sins because of his sympathetic listening powers. He does not absolve but merely listens and blesses. In the desert, some distance away, lives another celebrated hermit of quite opposite manner. Dion Pugil is a clairvoyant confessor who judges, castigates and advises his penitents in no uncertain terms. (His intials are the reverse of those of Plinio Designori, a friend of the Magister Ludi who will figure in this phase of his life.)
>
> Joseph, despite his unfailing patience and mildness to his clients, becomes interiorly quite disturbed: bored, beset by temptation, listless; he feels disappointed in his lack of progress and is tempted to suicide. Disgusted with himself and his life he leaves his hermitage.
>
> Dion Pugil's reputation is known to him; he decides to go to him for advice. A traveler who offers to take him there turns out to be Dion Pugil himself. Joseph confesses to him and, as he had promised, resolves to obey him. He takes up a life of service to Dion, living with him as a penitent.
>
> Dion falls ill and Joseph must bear the penitents' confessions. Before dying Dion confesses to Joseph that when they met he had been fleeing his hermitage too, bored and sick of life. Joseph's coming had forced his cure. "God does not send us despair in order to kill us, but to awaken new life in us" (page 467).

This Incarnation corresponds to the second phase of Knecht's life. During this period Knecht lays down his office after being brought to that point, in part, by discussions with an old friend Plinio Designori. Designori's influence is related to that of Father Jacobus and Tegularius in its effect on Knecht's development.

Designori's part in Knecht's life goes back to the first phase, to Knecht's student days. Designori attends the school at Waldzell, famed for its development of Bead Game players (page 79). He is the rare "extra-mural" student, not intended for the province or the order; his patrician family has aided the order in the past and is privileged to send its sons there for their education (page 84). Plinio Designori, handsome, eloquent and fiery, makes no effort to hide his "non-Castalian and worldly outlook" (page 83). With evident pleasure in his iconoclastic role before the other students he often contrasts the normal and natural life of the world with the " arrogant scholastic intellectualism' of Castalia." (page 86). Designori's critique appeals to something within Knecht himself and he consults the old Music Master about his response. The latter with pedagogical shrewdness entrusts Knecht with the task of raising the level of the debate and forming an apologia for Castalia.

In doing this Knecht is forced to think about and reconcile the two poles of his life; dedication to Castalia and the realization of his more personal and, at times, contra-Castalian ideals. One may speak, as the novel does, of a "musical study in two themes" (page 85), regarding the relation between the worldly student and Knecht as long as it is remembered that the Designori-theme is not without sympathetic resonance in Knecht and vice versa. In their friendship Knecht senses "that something important awaited him in the shape of this fellow student; something beautiful perhaps, an enlargement of his horizon, some knowledge or revelation, or perhaps again a temptation and danger. . ." (pages 87, 88). Designori is, Knecht suspects, the "voice of nature" (page 88) (Natur, GS, vi, page 171); he represents the world where "were to be found tender mothers and children, starving men and almshouses, newspapers and elections. . . ." (page 91). With some discreet help from the Music Master Knecht learns at least for the time to justify the contemplative, monastic life of Castalia for himself, despite whatever questions Designori may have raised about its rarefied abstraction, sterility and lack of contact with the "real world." The influences of the debate are mutual: ". . . to the same extent that he (Designori) infected Joseph with the atmosphere of his own world, he breathed the Castalian air and succumbed to its charm and influence" (page 98). In the course of a personal conversation Designori well sums up the debate for himself and Joseph:

> You are the protagonist of *intensive cultivation of the spirit*, and I of the *natural life*. During our struggles, you have gained some inkling of the dangers of the natural life and have made capital out of it: your task is therefore to show how *the natural, ingenuous life without spiritual discipline would degenerate into a morass and eventually lead back to the jungle*. *I*, on the contrary, *must* ever and again *recall how audacious, dangerous and ultimately sterile is a life based solely* on the spirit (page 98). (Italics mine.)

The breach in Joseph Knecht's Castalian walls is exemplified in some verse he writes at this time, a "trace of rebellion" since Castalia rejects such effort: "the composing of verses ranked as the most impossible, laughable and prohibited of all activities" (page 97). These poems, printed between the narrative and the three *Incarnations*, attest to Knecht's awareness of the instability and provisional character of any moment of life, any life-style, even any great synthesis of human culture--an augury of things to come.

Dion Pugil and Joseph Famulus prefigure the ultimate flowering of the debate begun in schooldays. Once in the intervening years Designori comes to the province on business and he and Joseph have a most embarrassing meeting. Now, around the eighth year of Joseph's office as Magister Ludi, as his "thoughts were already turning to his quest for a way to freedom" the worldling politician returns on business (page 260). The two meet in much the same way that Dion Pugil and Joseph Famulus did: both intent on getting away from or altering their present life, discontented with what has gone before. Designori's estrangement from his world of politics and business is etched in the suffering on his face which so impresses Knecht at this crucial encounter. Another face of the "world" is therein revealed to Knecht, the opposite of its "laugh, smile, love of life, joy of power" (page 263). The complexity of the whole novel is largely due to a constant balancing of such opposites; no statement or ideal seems left unbalanced by its dialectic opposite. Worldly life, exultation in power on the one hand; sadness, disappointment, suffering on the other. Life after Waldzell for Designori has been a come-down; nothing has lived up to its ideal: college, family, business or politics. Partly he blames Waldzell for not making possible some integration of the best of the Castalian spirit and that of the world. He voices, undoubtedly, one of Hesse's obsessions, the harmony of opposites. He yearns now for a revival and this has brought him to the Pedagogic Province as much as any business (page 289).

Conversely Designori's visit to Castalia for Knecht "constitutes a call, a compromise, an opening up of a new avenue to your world. . . ." (page 280). What Knecht yearns for positively is quite simple: "for youth, for young and unspoiled pupils, for a modest task devoid of glamour, as for example the post of grammar or music teacher in one of the lower schools" (page 293). More profoundly: "What I am looking for now is a simple natural task--a human being who has need of me. . . ." (page 304). As The Journey to the East promised, the ideal Hesse and his hero now see for themselves is one of service. In the "Letter to the Pedagogy," prepared largely by Tegularius, Knecht

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details the negative side more specifically, the faults he finds in Castalia and its life, his ideas of what it needs and why it no longer can satisfy him. The Bead Game is in danger from its practitioners or devotees, the members of the order. The member often fails "in his attitude towards his place in the structure of humanity, the world and world history. . . .;" he takes for granted his position in this elite society and the many people and institutions which must work to make his life possible (page 315). The life of the Castalians "is not consciously of service to anything, neither higher nor lower, but tends, if only slightly, towards self-enjoyment and self-appraise (sic) . . . ." (page 315). His intercourse with Father Jacobus and Plinio has helped form his critique of Castalia, its lack of historical perspective and its lack of involvement. The contemplative life of the Castalians is of diminished worth and value unless its fruits are communicated and made of service to men. Teachers for mankind seem to him to be the urgent need:

> In its original sense Magister Ludi simply meant schoolmaster--and the schoolmaster, the good and courageous schoolmaster whom our land will need increasingly the more Castalia is threatened and the more its treasures crumble away or grow stale. Above all else we need teachers, men who will bring to our youth the capacity for moderation and judgment and who, by their example, will instil a reverence for truth, obedience to the spirit and service to the word. . . . (page 327).

In the story of "The Father Confessor" both protagonists are about to abandon their callings, bored with their lives as spiritual counselors. Dion Pugil is at first really "trapped" into showing some strength to Joseph Famulus in order to help him. In doing so, concerning himself with Joseph's spiritual health, he actually brings about his own recovery. Joseph, by accepting Dion Pugil's help, is ultimately himself restored to his previous kind of life as a father confessor with a strong accent also on the service of another, Dion Pugil. Each finds once again a human being who needs him (page 304). The Magister Ludi and Designori find each other in the midst of similar difficulties. Spirit and nature, contemplation and action, need each other.

It is not transparently clear that Hesse intended a point by point comparison of the life of "The Father Confessor" and of Joseph Knecht to be possible. There are, of course, decided similarities. Joseph Knecht has decided to leave his post as Magister Ludi and the order when Designori providentially appears. The latter has no plans to undertake any revolution in the pattern of his life but is sad and suffering from its disappointments and his personal aridity. He is immediately enlisted in Knecht's plans and in cooperating undergoes at the hands of Knecht a revival of his faith, the Castalian-learned ideals of his youth. He himself describes Knecht's impact on him:

> Gradually he involved me in his plan for laying down his office and abandoning the Province, continually insisting upon how much he needed my advice, my support, and also my silence, for apart from myself he had no friends in the outside world nor any experience of it. I must confess that I listened to all this with pleasure. . . . Today I consider the fiction that his predicament resembled my own, that he was just as dependent upon my sympathy and devotion as I upon his, to be a winning and pleasant fantasy which he wove around me; but I should not care to hazard how far his game was consciously thought out and intentional. . . . While he listened to and even applauded my often coarse and naive criticisms, doubts and insults against Castalia, all the while struggling to free himself from its toils, he had really and truly lured me and led me back, reaccustomed me to meditation, taught and changed me through Castalian music

> and contemplation, and made me one of you again. . . . (pages 294-295).

From what has been seen above of Knecht's ideals for Castalia, especially in his "Letter to the Pedagogy," it is apparent that with the help of Designori he is going to fulfill what he considers should be the genuine ideal of Castalia, the transmission through service of the riches garnered in discipline and contemplation, a union of contemplation and action. He will leave Castalia and undertake the tutoring of Designori's son Tito.

The Third Incarnation--The Indian Life

> "The Indian Life" finds Knecht envisioning himself as Dasa (servant), the son of Ravana, a rajah and an incarnation of Vishnu. Dasa's stepmother is intent upon having her son Nala succeed Ravana. A Brahman sends Dasa off with some shepherds for his safety. In the course of their search for pasture he one day meets a Yogi living deep in the forest who impresses him very much. Meanwhile Nala is crowned rajah.
>
> Dasa is by no means indifferent to the charms of women despite his great attraction to the eremitical life of the Yogi. He is smitten with love for the beautiful girl Pravati and marries her. They settle down to farm but he is really only happy in his passion for her. Once while Dasa is gone Pravati is picked up by Nala and apparently not entirely unwillingly. Irate Dasa kills Nala at an opportune moment and becomes a fugitive. In his flight he again comes on the silent Yogi in the forest.
>
> He settles down to the life of a servant to the Yogi. One day, in the course of his regular duty of going for water for the Yogi, he comes upon Pravati. She has come to tell him he is the new rajah. He forgets the Yogi, returns with Pravati and becomes deeply involved in the life of a father and ruler. Against his inclination he is involved in war too. Soon he and his wife become estranged largely over his reluctance for war and she falls in love with one of the commanders of his army. The realm is attacked; Dasa is imprisoned and his son killed. He awakes; it has all been a dream: he is back getting water for the Yogi with whom he decides to remain.

Knecht's third anticipatory life, "The Indian Life," is in itself a detailed and captivating story weighted with matter for

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reflection and speculation. What it has to say, beyond one essential point, about the actual course or development of Knecht's personality is most uncertain. It definitely concerns itself with some of the chief themes of Knecht's mature life: the contemplative life and the active life; the rift between spirit and nature (the senses) and the two faces of the world and its life. But this concern with similar themes is often not truly parallel to Knecht's actual life: e.g., in apparent contrast to the final direction of the novel "The Indian Life" gives pride of place to contemplation minus external involvement. Perhaps the contradiciton is explainable in terms of the ideals of the younger Knecht, the writer of "The Indian Life," and of the older Knecht, the Magister Ludi. The first, an ardent novice in the order, justifies the contemplative, aesthetic life of Castalia in "The Indian Life's" praise of the Yogi; the elder Knecht sees the flaws in Castalia and, while claiming to be concerned for its future, is himself ready to leave it for a life of service to another or others. Similarly in "The Indian Life" Dasa shows tremendous love and devotion to his son Ravana, does all for him, but in the end this is labeled Maya (illusion) and the service of the contemplative Yogi is the final note. On the other hand in Knecht's life the cool serenity and contemplation of the Bead Game and Castalia are, if not rejected, at least complemented by involvement in teaching Tito.

Notwithstanding these and other apparent contradictions between the third Incarnation and the actual course of Knecht's life, they are bound together by an essential predilection for service, no matter how divergent the object of that service. At their first encounter Dasa is captivated by the Yogi's "perfect devotion to service" (page 471). And the story concludes with Dasa's decision to stay and serve the Yogi (page 502). The Yogi's own service, praised in the first reference, is obviously service to the Eternal, to Brahman, at least to the spirit, not to mankind in general or specifically. And Dasa's service will be to the Yogi who really does not need it: he is quite self-sufficient, free of needs, used to living alone. So Dasa's service to him will be, if not directly to the Eternal, to the Eternal shining forth in the Yoga adept and to the whole spirit of such a quest. Again what is present here is not a service to mankind or men in the more usual sense of serving some necessity or lack of men.

In the closing pages of the life of the now resigned Magister Ludi service appears in this latter sense, the service of a need in men, the need for education. This is Knecht's destiny and fulfillment. With the help of his co-conspirator, Plinio Designori, it is determined that he will teach the latter's son Tito. In his final interview with Alexander, the head of the order, Knecht attempts once again to explain his departure from office and order and his future plans. He refers to the numerous awakenings in his life, moments of vivid apprehension of his own reality, what he must be and do and, by analogy, compares himself in these to St. Christopher (pages 356-357). The latter, according to legend:

> . . . wished only to serve. Service was his forte and his art, and in this role he realized himself. Yet it was by no means a matter of indifference to him whom he served: his master had to be the greatest and most powerful ruler,

> and whenever he heard of one who was mightier than his own he would offer his services to him (page 357).

Similarly Knecht's early awakenings had come to him with the proviso that he was to serve the highest (page 123). The Bead Game had to some degree fulfilled this requirement. And as the Music Master had told him, authority in Castalia which was to come his way too involved service, strict service, even "bondage" (page 130). But as the "Letter to the Pedagogy" attests, even this can be superseded by a higher kind of service; this, in Knecht's eyes, is to teach children, to serve the larger world outside of Castalia where it most needs it. His interchange with Father Jacobus among others, he tells Alexander, has helped him realize his nature as not merely a Castalian but a man (page 360).

All this must be qualified by other evidence attesting to the typically human complexity of Knecht's psyche, the interweaving of a variety of motives. Some of the complexity may also be due to an imperfect realization of the novelist's manifold intentions. In any case, Knecht may be determined on service in the form of teaching a child and present this as his own reaction to the introverted character of Castalia. He may express and truly be concerned for the future of the Bead Game and the order, but really paramount in his thoughts and desires is the ineluctable Hessean compulsion for the self's realization. The letter written by Tegularius as Knecht's apologia bears the imprint of Tegularius' non-conformist tendencies and his somewhat instinctive anti-hierarchical feeling. It is an attempt to justify Knecht's behavior in a lofty and somewhat academic manner by putting Castalia in the center of things. Yet for Knecht himself the motivation is simpler yet profounder:

> It became more and more clear to him during this time of gradual secession and leave-taking that *the actual cause of his alienation and desire to depart* had not arisen from his knowledge of the dangers which lay in store for Castalia and his care for its future, but *lay simply in the fact that an empty and idle residue of himself, of his heart and his soul, now desired its rights and wished to fulfill them them* (page 309, 310). (Italics mine.)

He reviews the course of his life and his awakenings. Each moment, each awakening, had had a singular appropriateness for the circumstances. All have been moments lived under the ideal of service to some great good, yet a service never separate from his own sense that his nature was being dutifully followed and fulfilled. One cannot, could not, be sure in any objective way that this was the only way to live; a certain amount of faith in one's own will and desires is necessary. One had to behave and think

> as though one were master over one's fate, because one accepted this life and self-deception unquestioningly--this mirage--with the appearance of self-determination and responsibility, and because for some unknown reason one had been created fundamentally more to act than to understand and driven more by impulsive urges than by the spirit (pages 342, 343).

Failing any certain criteria for individual behavior one does his best in responding to his lights, his "urges," his awakenings" and *acting*, above all, in accord with them.

Alexander's reaction to Knecht's written and oral apologia confirms Knecht's own admission of the hegemony of self in his actions. He would never become completely the "company man," the "organization man" that Castalia may consider ideal. Despite earlier efforts in that direction he is not capable of totally achieving "an exact identification between person and office" (page 215). No matter how,

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for the benefit of his superiors, Knecht tries to explain his dedication to "transcendence," to being ready to pass beyond a particular stage of life, it is rooted in a basic commitment to the fulfillment of the person. In Knecht's case, this fulfillment is not to be entrusted to identification with a role in the order. Though Alexander may not be able completely to comprehend Knecht's motivation he is basically aware of this un-Castalian cultivation of self:

> I understand, . . . But as I see it, and however you may explain it, I still run up against the same basic reason for all your idiosyncrasies. *You have had too much feeling for your own person*, or have been too dependent upon it, which is not the same thing as being a great personality. One can be a star of the first magnitude in talent, will-power and endurance, and be so well-poised that one revolves in the system to which one belongs with the minimum of friction and waste of energy, while another whose axis is out of alignment with the center, wastes half his energy in eccentric movements which leave him so much the weaker and his surroundings all distorted. You must belong to the latter type, but I must say that you have been able to conceal the fact surprisingly well. . . . Whoever wishes to serve should devote himself only to the master to whom he has sworn fealty, in good times or bad, and not with the secret proviso that he can change masters as soon as he finds a more illustrious one. In the latter case he becomes a judge of his master, and this is exactly what you are doing. . . . (page 358). (Italics mine.)

The Conclusion of Magister Ludi

The details of Knecht's end are basic to any interpretation of this conclusion. Knecht arrives at Designori's home to take up his task as Tito's tutor. In a gesture of independence--rooted in fear of further constriction by educators--he has gone ahead by himself to Belpunt, the mountain retreat which is to be the site of their studies. Knecht follows the next day and arrives at the mountain retreat made ill by the unaccustomed heights. He dissembles his discomfort in

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order to enter sympathetically into Tito's interests as the latter shows him his botanical collection. He sleeps poorly but rises early to follow Tito to the shore of the lake over which the sun is about to break. As it does Tito spontaneously dances, celebrating his own powers and life, greeting the rising sun. When he comes to himself and realizes that he is observed he breaks the spell by suggesting that they race the sun to the opposite cliff which it is beginning to illumine. Ignoring his discomfort in this altitude Knecht follows Tito into the icy water only to drown shortly after. Tito vainly tries to reach him and save him but to no avail. He finally sits on the beach, crushed by what has happened and by his awareness of how much he had already grown to love the man.

The essential point of this novel and several oft-met Hessean themes come together in the denouement. They are 1) new beginnings; 2) the conflict of spirit and instinct; 3) his educational ideal; 4) service (or love) and death.

1) Steppenwolf is the most forceful Hessean treatment of the value of new beginnings, of new arrangements of life's elements. More than Harry Haller, though, Knecht is able to carry out such an ideal. He leaves Castalia and his life of service and dedication to its ideals and the Bead Game to serve a new master, to take up a life of teaching. The name Belpunt reinforces the idea of change with the implication that Knecht is bridging the distance between two disparate lives. Heretofore it has been a life of dedication to the aesthetic and intellectual ideal of Castalia. In line with his apologia Knecht is making a new beginning, undertaking a life of service, better, of

love for a human being who needs him. The poetic fragment from Knecht's youth called "Steps" which he had once thought of calling "Transcendence" expresses well this ideal of readiness for new calls, new forms of life. It recalls the strong emphasis in Steppenwolf on malleability, on retaining openness to new facets of personality, not enclosing one's self in a narrowly-defined personality.

> As every blossom fades and all youth sinks
> into old age, so every life's design,
> each flower of wisdom, every good, attains
> its prime and cannot last for ever.
> At life's each call the heart must be prepared
> to take its leave and to commence afresh,
> courageously and with no hint of grief
> submit itself to other, newer ties.
> A magic dwells in each beginning and
> protecting us it tells us how to live. (page 396)

2). The life-long Hessean conflict between Geist and Natur rears its head briefly at the close of Magister Ludi perhaps to remind the reader that there is never more than a shaky truce possible between the two disparities. The allusion here is brief but sufficient to restate the notion, clear in Steppenwolf and Narcissus and Goldmund, that the two are never easily harmonized, that choosing one means losing or rejecting the other to some degree. Knecht, in the early morning tableau, has his cool reason to tell him that he has not been feeling well in this altitude, is older than the boy, and that the waters would be far too cold for him. Yet his will to not fail the boy, to fulfill his own conception of what a teacher should be for the pupil, his love for Tito, leads him to the otherwise foolhardy act of diving into the chill waters (page 383). To obey reason and common sense would have been to preserve his life; to follow his less rational love for the boy means the risk at least of danger to himself if not death.

The attraction of Natur for death has been noted before. Here it achieves literal fulfillment. Knecht's devotion to spirit is supplemented, through the agency of Designori, the representative of Natur, by a Natur-propelled act.

3) Knecht's death in the icy water, so near to suicide in appearance, is explicable also in terms of his demanding educational ideal. This ideal is demanding both of teacher and pupil: a) in what the teacher expects of and wants for the boy in the way of his development; b) and in what he thinks he himself, as the teacher, should be. But the two are intertwined. The Master intends to start where the boy is, e.g., with his interest in alpine plants and butterflies, and be taught by him (page 377). He is both Knecht (servant) and Magister (master). He is himself to teach more by what he is, by, as Tito sees it, his nobility rather than by words, platitudes (pages 377-378). A self-effacing reticence to lecture on the part of Knecht confirms the impression that this is the schoolmaster's ideal also.

In according with a long-standing ideal of Hesse's, indicated by contrast in Beneath the Wheel, Knecht envisions his task as one of bringing to realization the gifts and powers of his pupil such as are demonstrated in his early morning dance (pages 379, 381). Most important is not what might be poured into the student but what can be drawn out of him, the degree to which is own specific destiny can be made actual.

The full development and all the implications of this pedagogy become clearer in the final act of Knecht's life.

4) In Journey to the East the narrator is told that he must

decrease in order for Leo the servant to increase. Now, in Magister Ludi, the servant, Knecht, is throughout at the center of the stage and in the story's conclusion the Magister merges with the servant to the point of dying for him whom he serves. To dive into the frigid waters of the lake--despite common sense reasons for not doing so and in order not to disappoint his pupil's expectations--is de facto a voluntary acceptance of death out of love for Tito, a sacrifice even. Hesse seems to wish to illustrate in action and in the vocabulary used chapter thirteen of St. John's Gospel. There Jesus, whom the disciples call "Teacher and Lord" (v. 13), takes on himself the office of a servant, washing their feet. "'If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.'" (v. 14). Knecht too, the Master of the Bead Game (Magister Ludi), becomes a humble school teacher (also a translation of Magister Ludi). Knecht's act of leaving Castalia for this new life, the life of a teacher, is to Alexander an indication of the deleterious influence of people like Plinio Designori. The influence of non-conformist Tegularius could also be indicted as will as that of Father Jacobus who taught him to look beyond Castalia. Yet, paradoxically, Knecht's answer to the call does not lead to any indulgence of personal whim; if it is individualism, it is not simply self-seeking individualism. It has its fruit or effect in death for him whom he has undertaken to serve. Christ the Master too was to die for his followers, as a service to them.

And the death itself, beyond putting the seal on Knecht's love, verifying its authenticity and depth, is--the reader is assured--to be of a value which Knecht's most assiduous teaching of the youth might never have been. The narrator divines Tito's thoughts after Knecht's death:

> Inasmuch as he felt partially responsible, despite any excuses that could be made, for the Magister's death, a feeling of sacred awe took hold of him which foretold that this guilt would change him completely and would make more demands upon him than he had hitherto ever demanded of himself (page 384).

Through his devotion to Tito and his death for him Knecht achieves a kind of immortality: the influence of his life on Tito would live on in the boy. A poem he discovered in the Designori's library the day before is fulfilled in him.

> Our good days fade, and yet we do not grieve
> If something dearer in their place they leave:
> Within our garden some rare blossom white,
> A child we teach, a booklet that we write. (page 374)

Again, as in one chapter of Siddhartha, the Christian influence in Hesse's background looms as paramount. The sacrificial death is one indication of this. Plunging into the waters of the lake Knecht is entering his tomb, assuredly, but also into a womb from which he is to issue forth as a persistent presence in Tito's life. Knecht is "baptized" and born anew in the life and spirit of Tito. Or, in more Oriental terms, also dear to Hesse, Knecht dies only to be in a sense reborn in Tito. The Music Master had looked on the young Knecht as his son, a perpetuation of his ideals, and Knecht has his son in Tito. The Castalian ideal in Knecht, no matter how qualified, is in him at least not sterile; the best in it reproduces itself, this is the book's promise, in the life of the boy he comes to serve, to teach.

Knecht's death fulfills at least one of the idea of a redemptive death. His example will have a lasting effect on his pupil, the one for whom he died. In fact there is evidence that the impact of his life and death were not lost on Castalia either; this is clear from the fact of the sympathetic recording of Knecht's life story and Castalia's survival two hundred years after Knecht's death. Death, so often wooed mysteriously and irrationally by heroes such as Harry Haller and Goldmund, here at least achieves something more immediately intelligible than a return to the "Great Mother." Like the Rainmaker Knecht dies for those he is supposed to serve. Like Joseph Famulus, despite a change of life, he finds himself remaining faithful to the ideal of the service of something great, changed as the object of that service may be.

There is no clear indication of how "The Indian Life" might exemplify Knecht's end. Perhaps, and this again is a distinct return to Oriental thought, Hesse means to say that life, with all its activity, even that of a rajah adminstering and defending a realm, a father living for his family, the Bead Game and all the apparatus involved in it and the life built around it--this is all Maya, illusion, unsubstantial, at most of relative value. But in that case, even the lesson of service seems to be nullified; it too is no more substantial than the rajah's life. Or is service--in the case of the Yogi, dedicated to God and in the other case, to Tito--the only human act that is not illusion, the only act that has some permanent value? Does this idea bind together the conclusion of the novel and that of "The Indian Life?" Dasa seems to affirm something of this nature as he muses on the Yogi's command to get some water:

> It was a service which had been asked of him, a task that one could obey and fulfill. It was infinitely better to obey and to serve than to sit merely thinking out ways of suicide, far more innocent and seemly than to rule and take responsibility. This much he knew. Good, Dasa, take your bowl then, fill it well with water and take it to your master (page 502)!

To act, to serve above all, is the way to give sense and meaning to life. "Truth must be lived," the Music Master had said.

Service and Other Ideals

It is possible to see Magister Ludi as another illustration of Hesse's Geist-Natur problem or of the same dichotomy understood in terms of the contemplative and the active life. Or implicit in the novel may be an effort to achieve an East-West synthesis with the former represented in the almost religious reverence given the Bead Game and its harmony while the West is represented in the constantly present tendency of Knecht toward active service, toward some utilization of wisdom for humanity. Evidence for the dichotomy, whatever its name, in man's spiritual life can easily be drawn from what has been exposed here. Knecht defends the contemplative spirit and ideal of Castalia; Designori pleads the needs and realities of the "real" world. As Knecht teaches the Benedictines the technique of the lofty Bead Game, Father Jacobus counters with the need Castalia has for recognizing history, the exigencies of time, space, men. There is the tension in Knecht himself between "impulsive urges" and "spirit"; between acting and understanding (page 345); between devotion to the kernel idea of the Bead Game and a hunger for "reality, for tasks and deeds. . . ." (page 353). There are the tendencies, conservative and pioneering, called the two poles of Knecht's life: "to preserve, to be loyal and to devote selfless service to the Hierarchy" and the other "to press forward, to grasp and conceive the reality" (page 247). These dichotomies and polarities, it must be emphasized, are never simply interchangeable with good and bad. Most evident to the reader is the continual balancing of goods, goods to some degree apparently mutually exclusive or contradictory. Even the final preference of Knecht for loving service over life and office in Castalia is not a simple rejection of the latter as is clear. In fact, one of the results of the Magister's leaving with Designori's cooperation is the latter's return to the practice of Castalian meditation.

Still, if service is no simple replacement for the awesome synthesis and discipline of Castalia and the venerable exercise of the Game, it does seem to have a finality and absoluteness about it which Knecht very early suspects the Game cannot be given. In more traditional language it seems to be a higher good. Magister Ludi's final word seems critical of attempts such as the Bead Game at harmonizing, synthesizing knowledge, science, culture; they are necessary, inevitable, even commendable yet pallid and nearly inconsequential alongside something so simple and human as teaching a child, loving or serving another. Contained within the book's judgment on the Game is a wider judgment on human intellectual effort, the great philosophical and cultural syntheses of human history, mankind's wisdom and the institutions and forms that embody them. Knecht's illicitly written poems especially express this and while they are the product of his younger days, they, like the Lives, seem to be prophetic of Knecht's final stance.

In their own images the *Poetic Fragments* underline a truth basic to the whole conception of Castalia and its heart, the Game. The Bead Game, they tell us, is just that, a *game*, i.e. this sublime synthesis of human knowledge is, ultimately, a somewhat arbitrary convention. It has rules for playing and while it is being played, while it is dominant, it is taken seriously by all involved. For all its concern with mankind's greatest achievements, it is of relative worth; it is not life itself. The fragment, "Soap Bubbles," equates the wisdom of an old man, the student's thesis and the young boy's soap bubbles. All three create their "unsubstantial magic dreams" from the "Maya--foam of worlds." All is a game which--while it lasts--has the value of revealing some ray of the "light eternal" (pages 394-395). Though the poems stress the evanescence and relativity of the Game, there is, then, some suggestion of the truth of *Steppenwolf*: it is a kind of wisdom to see the world and its achievements as a sublime game.

In "A Dream" the poet sits in an ancient library dazzled to find books solving enigmas and relating all segments of reality, e.g., "Squaring the Circle--Final Stage" and "Colour and Music, their Relationship: Primary and Refracted Colours Shown to Correspond with Notes of Varying Pitch" (page 391). Spellbound he pours over these promising volumes but is distracted by the elderly archivist who enters and begins erasing titles and arbitrarily replacing them with new ones. So much for the seeming syntheses and solutions of human wisdom! What could exempt the Bead Game from a similar devaluation?

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Man's most magnificent attainments are of such questionable ultimacy.

Nearly all the Poetic Fragments sing the same refrain. "Upon Reading an Old Philosopher" weaves together the transitoriness of human wisdom and the decay of a wise individual who "set for dying" declines into "lamentable, blank futility" (page 389). The conclusion: even man's most exalted moods are unsatisfying; "all things on earth must rot and fade and die" (page 389). To an unlettered savage our writing and printing could as well be "crows-feet on the snow" and, ultimately, with some justification according to the mind of young Knecht (page 388).

A stronger indictment of the Game is the complaint about its powerlessness and irrelevance in the face of chaos and violence. "The Last of the Bead-Players" sits in a land "ravaged by war and pestilence," the Game over, Castalia destroyed, the beads once heavy with meaning now nothing but "brightly-coloured beads" (page 390). This desolate scene reinforces too the impression of the irrelevance of the esoteric and academic life of the cloistered Castalians. In a sense Knecht foresees a "fall" of Castalia consequent on its uncritical and unthinking hubris.

Problems in the Novel

Boulby says that ultimately Magister Ludi remains "internally inconsistent" (Boulby, page 267).[12] There do appear to be unreconciled elements in the novel. Immediately above the point has been underscored

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[12] Theodore Ziolkowski (The Novels of Hermann Hesse, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965) explains well the source of some of the inconsistencies of Magister Ludi. His explanation is largely in terms of the composition of the various parts, body of the novel, poetic fragments, the lives, at different times and the difficulty for Hesse himself in harmonizing them in a work whose composition spanned at least a decade.

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that the Bead Game and all it represents are at the most of limited value. *If* there is *any* absolute or even lasting value for Knecht to dedicate himself to it is service. However, to say that much can only be done with much qualification. Hesse's evaluation of the Bead Game and similar attempts as of very relative worth seems belied by the sheer space and effort devoted to its elaboration in the novel. Does service really exorcise or cancel out Hesse's obsession with the ideal behind the Bead Game? Though hints of Knecht's disillusionment with Castalia occur fairly early, still the author displays a persistent fascination with the ideal of the Bead Game which makes his judgment of its relativity less believable and the accolade given to service seem an after-thought. One may allow that this apparent inconsistency reflects existential tension in Hesse; still, elsewhere, especially in *Steppenwolf* and *Narcissus and Goldmund*, he has written works of greater cohesiveness. If, as seems likely, much of the story dealing with the Bead Game and the chronicle of Knecht's life by a Castalian are meant to be ironic--in this case attributing a religions seriousness to something essentially very much less ultimate--it seems greatly overdone. One is left with a strong suspicion of the author's persisting dedication to the Castalian ideal, to the harmonization of all opposites and all knowledge. Solely in terms of space and attention the writer is more devoted to the Bead Game than he is to the eventual decision of Knecht. If the novel is in any sense a bow to service as the highest response Knecht can make to life, it is a remarkably passionless and unemphasized gesture except finally on the last page.

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Hesse's Great Mother has pretty well been left welcoming her son Goldmund on his return to her in death. Yet the fascination with some sort of reconciliation of opposites, synthesis of all knowledge and activity, remains unmitigated in Hesse, only now embodied in a "mathematical-musical mental game" instead of in the warm maternal flesh (Boulby, page 262). The intellectual, computer-like face of this reconciliation hardly seems calculated to appeal to a Hessean hero. And, of course, that is the situation here; the hero's rejection of it is in character with what has been seen of Hesse; the _author's_ fascination with _this form_ of his ideal is the perplexing thing. Whatever greater forthrightness about this might be desirable, Hesse's Knecht does come through to a more flesh-and-blood ideal even though it has never had _great_ prominence in the works here considered. _Siddhartha_ and _Journey to the East_ most clearly point to service as the highest ultimate occupation for the self, a final resting place for restless seekers.

But service is surrounded by ambiguities or inconsistencies in _Magister Ludi_. Though at least by the end of the book and oddly enough earlier in the _Poetic Fragments_, the Game is no longer accorded by Knecht the primacy it once had, does _service_ replace it in his life? Or, more broadly put, is there either a persistent or an ultimate force or power motivating Knecht, something that gives his personality and character cohesion? Or does this motivation or goal vary in different phases of his life? There appear to be three plausible possibilities: 1) Knecht throughout is dedicated to the ideal of service of the highest reality; 2) Knecht's actions and life are dictated by his response to and faithfulness to his own nature, his destiny; 3) Unalloyed service to the world or another person representing it is the final motivation of Knecht.

1) Is service to an ideal the mainspring of Knecht's life, the propelling force in his activity? There is certainly enough evidence to give an affirmative answer to this question. All three Lives evidence that for young Knecht service to an ideal, to spirit, however vague that may be in this novel, constitutes a most exalted kind of life. The Rainmaker lives for the power in nature with which he must deal and, in some sense, for the community which he serves as Rainmaker. Joseph Famulus and Dion Pugil are both brought back, through an ingenious development, to loyalty to the ideal of their lives, the Christian god they serve as confessors for his people. In "The Indian Life," Dasa rejects finally everything he had been involved in or might be by reason of his position as a rajah's son, to serve the Yogi who, of course, sits in austere silence waiting on god, the All, Brahman.

Throughout the main body of the novel, too Knecht is drawn to and committed to service of the great ideal embodied in the Bead Game. Despite occasional doubts he gives himself to it sufficiently to become a singularly proficient player and finally Magister Ludi. At cost to himself and his desires he serves the order in an external mission. He attempts to identify himself and his aspirations with those of the all-encompassing Bead Game. He defends it against Plinio Designori and, even after his break with Castalia and the Game, retains sufficient conviction of their worth to help Designori

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rebuild his life in accord with Castalian spirit and discipline.

In instancing the example of St. Christopher who always sought to serve the highest master, Knecht is, though Alexander remains uncomprehending, remaining true on the highest level to the ideal of service. He will serve but he claims that a higher ideal than even that of Castalia beckons him. This is where his ideal of service merges with his loyalty to self.

2) Is all of Knecht's service to spirit and eventually to persons but a more radical service to or response to his own self, to the calls and awakenings that come to him? Following his sojourn with the Elder Brother Knecht, according to the chronicler, is increasingly responsive to his personal awakenings. These make all of Castalia and its esteemed categories more relative to him while self-realization enters the fore-ground (page 121). Later, despite the elaborate apologia and commentary on Castalia, Knecht admits to the force of a residue of self in his decision to leave (pages 309-310). The Music Master, that concrete illustration of much of Knecht's ideal--at least at one moment of his life--had encouraged him to look to himself, to seek self-perfection, rather than some impossibly ideal and perfect doctrine or synthesis. "The Godhead is in yourself, not in theories and in books. Truth must be lived, not taught" (page 77).

Encouraged thus by the Music Master and initiated further by the Elder Brother, Designori and Father Jacobus, into the realization that the Bead Game is no final resting place for him, he allows the personal element to grow while faithfully discharging his duties to Castalia.

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Because of its consistency with a theme so powerfully built up in Steppenwolf, the poem "Steps" seems likely to be expressive of a fundamental orientation of a Hessean hero. It reinforces an affirmative answer to the second question: what the self demands must be followed though it mean moving on again and again from some comfortable or congenial realm.

> At life's each call the heart must be prepared
> to take its leave and to commence afresh,
> courageously and with no hint of grief
> submit itself to other, newer ties.
> A magic dwells in each beginning and
> protecting us it tells us how to live. (page 396)

It suggests that even the apparent finality of Knecht's act of devotion to Tito and whatever else he symbolizes may be but a "step" too on the way; perhaps further reincarnations wait:

> Maybe death's hour too will send us out
> new-born toward undreamed-of lands, maybe
> life's call to us will never find an end . . . (page 396)

3) It would seem clear from the foregoing that Knecht's service is not focused, as Peter Camenzind's was in regard to Boppi, on the needs or requirements of another person. He is serving an ideal outside himself, not another person, and in such service is fulfilling a basic drive of his own nature; he is responding to his destiny, to use a hallowed Hessean term. So the third question is; if, at least in the earlier part of the story, Knecht's motivation has not been service of persons so much as service of ideals, does it become service of persons, something approaching self-giving love, an acting on that "love of the world" he claims Father Jacobus taught him? Is this what his association with Tito represents?

Readers of Magister Ludi must be impressed on coming to it, especially after a work like Narcissus and Goldmund, by the coldness of its atmosphere and the passionless abstraction of the entire milieu of Castalia. Women are absent entirely from Castalia and no warm mutuality comparable to that between Narcissus and Goldmund exists even in Tegularius' attachment to Knecht. The latter rather cools and controls the whole relationship and, indeed, in a sense, uses Tegularius in the end. Even Dasa's passion for his wife is ultimately relegated to the category of May as Dasa casts his lot with the contemplative Yogi. Throughout, it must be said, service is most particularly given to the Bead Game, to the spirit, to intellect, to the order or, as above, to the awakenings within Knecht. Service in a more personal or even humanitarian sense must wait for Knecht's decision to leave Castalia and work for the wider world in the concrete form of Tito.

Even this service of flesh and blood, the most comprehensible to today's humanists, is rendered somewhat more abstract if it is recalled that Knecht spoke of it to Alexander as dedicating himself to a higher service. The weight seems to be on his, Knecht's, fulfillment of a fairly elitist goal rather than on the good of the beneficiary of his service. One might give it a halo of a kind of self-emptying by recalling and applying here the words of the Gospel: "Let him who is greatest among you become the least. . . ." But there seems no unequivocal warrant in the text itself for such an interpretation. Leo of The Journey to the East appears more consistently the humble servant than Joseph Knecht.

Yet, granting that overall the atmosphere of Castalia and

Magister Ludi is chill and its ideal of service generally rather rarefied, there *is* the final act of Knecht: diving recklessly into the water after his pupil. Conceivably in this last moment of his life Knecht is manifesting more humanly and warmly some of the love that raises service above the level of duty. Earlier, in his friendship with Tegularius, Knecht had recognized that the latter was stronger in love than he (page 138). Is Knecht's "breaking-out" of Castalia symbolic of his breaking out of a self-enclosed ego, a breaking out definitively displayed in his sacrifice for Tito? The self-control and ever so-measured power of the perfectly-formed Castalian finally gives way to what seems to be more of an act of spontaneous self-giving. Knecht's death in the mountain lake is surely a dramatic and total enough proof of his concern for Tito, the wholeheartedness of his dedication to Tito's service. It fulfills the Music Master's injunction to live the truth rather than teach it; in fact he lives it before he is able really to attempt to teach it. It fulfills further his earlier intuition that men are made "more to act than to understand and driven more by impulsive urges than by the spirit" (page 343). Though again, as so often in this novel, *both-and* is probably closer to the truth than *either-or*. One could say that Knecht's leap into the water is but the acting out or fulfillment of what had been determined in his spirit the moment he decided to teach Tito. In that case, Knecht's final moments symbolize the perfect fusion of thought and deed, the contemplative and the active, the ideal and the real.

Music

On the first and fatal morning that Tito and Knecht are together by the lake at Belpunt the late Magister Ludi, now truly a school master, ponders the use to which he will put Tito's great zeal for demanding sport. The teacher appreciates the place of such arduous and disciplined exertion; however, sports are only "one means . . . and not the most important for music would obviously have more far-reaching results" (page 380). Hesse's intentions in this novel are simplified not at all by the recognition that along with the ambiguous ideal of service, just discussed, there is another and equally important theme, music. Music and the Music Master, the latter a living expression of the power Knecht sees in music, are as central in the Magister's life as service. More explicitly than service music is shown to be man's subtle path to wisdom, the agent of his serene integration, the way to the perfection (Vollendung) and sanctity (Seligkeit) that shine forth from the elderly Music Master before his death (page 234; GS, vi, page 355).

Not all music is apt for this great function, for being, in effect, a means to man's salvation. Romantic it may be to accord music such a lofty status in life and salvation but the music thus commended in Magister Ludi is not romantic music (page 28). It is the music of Handel and Purcell and above all of Bach (pages 27, 148). In detailing the history and development of the Bead Game and the ideal behind it, the narrator writes:

> It is for us an almost unimaginable miracle how the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries could have maintained their musical style for so long in unchanging purity, how it is almost impossible to discover anything really bad in

> the mass material that was composed during those centuries, how the eighteenth century, when degeneration had set in, could still produce that pyrotechnic display of styles, fashions and schools--vivid, magnificent and self-conscious.
>
> . . . .
>
> We have little or no interest today for example in theology and the ecclesiastical culture of the eighteenth century or for the philosophy of the Age of Reason, but we see in the cantatas, passions and preludes of Bach the ultimate sublimation of Christian culture (pages 28, 29).

"Intoxicating," "ecstatic" music does not perform a healing function. Throughout Magister Ludi ideal music is not of a type that panders to emotion or feeling in the sentimental sense but music which contributes to serenity as it flows also from serenity: Lu Bu We is quoted appositely from a section on ancient Chinese music:

> When music is not serene the people murmur and life becomes discordant, all of which is the result of the essence of music having been misunderstood since it was composed solely of intoxicating harmonic effects (page 30).

In these remarks and the appreciation quoted above of classical music can be seen an area of total agreement between Knecht and the Castalian community in the centuries following his death, agreement on the ineffable value of music. At the time Knecht himself lived, music among the Castalians seems to have felt the dessicating influence of Castalia's rarefied and abstract ideal.

The prime example for us and for Knecht of the transfiguring power of music, the Music Master, as was noted earlier, voices implicit objections to the ethos of Castalia and warns Knecht against expecting too much from the Game. The Magister's own veneration of the aged Music Master appropriately strikes his friend Carlo Ferromonte, a true Castalian, as a bit too religious:

> Taking everything into consideration I am not a great lover of mysticism, particularly as I am a musician and historian, a pedant and friend of pure categories. As we in Castalia are neither a Christian congregation nor an Indian or Taoist brotherhood, it seems to me that this elevation into the company of the saints, and, therefore into a purely religious category, is not actually admissible to us (page 232).

Their conversation or debate about the Music Master reminds us again of Knecht's criticism of Castalia and its denizens for abstraction and lack of relation to the real world, to reality. Any passing beyond the abstract, the intellectual, is viewed with suspicion. It is just this synthesis of contemplation and action, of music and some practical, even moral, effect of music that the Music Master typifies so well. What Knecht admires in him is largely summed up in two frequently recurring words: Heiterkeit, serenity, gaiety, cheerfulness, and, to a lesser degree, Frömmigkeit, piety, devoutness.

Hesse suggests a theory about what music does or ideally should do, and how it does it. The theory, given in the words of Knecht and the narrator, is necessarily brief for the subject is not one that lends itself to clarity and precision. Of its elements the more easily grasped one is Knecht's belief that immersion in the kind of music he means can lead to serenity, a harmony within oneself and with the universe. This is expressed with reference to Chinese or Taoist thought. Less understandable and more likely to be questioned is Knecht's reading into music or a moral power, his equation of the spirit of great music with high, "knightly morality" (page 42). What Knecht has to say on this matter is transcribed by the chronicler:

> We consider classical music to be the essence and epitome of our culture because it is its most lucid, characteristic

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> gesture and utterance. In this music we posses the heritage of antiquity and Christianity, a spirit of serener and more courageous piety, an unsurpassed knightly morality. For a code of morals, in the last analysis, means the classic gesture of culture--an amalgamated image of human behaviour in the form of a gesture.
>
> . . . .
>
> Human behaviour, the expression of which is music, is everywhere the same: it rests on the same type of knowledge of life and strives for the same type of superiority to coincidence. The gestures of classical music signify knowledge of the human tragedy, acceptance of man's destiny, courage and serenity.
>
> Whether it be in the grace of a Handel or a Couperin minuet, the over-tender sublimated gesture of sensuality as in many of the Italians or in Mozart, the tranquil preparedness for death as in Bach, it is nevertheless always a courage in the face of death, a courtliness, possessing within it a sound of superhuman laughter, of immortal serenity. Thus should it ring too in our Bead Game, and in our whole life, actions and suffering (pages 42-43).

The language is, if evocative, quite difficult in its illusiveness to bring to more propositional form. Such remarks are not immediately comprehensible: classical music is the most characteristic gesture of our culture; a code of morals means an image of human behaviour in the form of a gesture. Possibly this is an acceptable reduction of what Knecht is saying: classical music in its actuality expresses a refinement and delicacy, a strength and honesty, a simplicity and courage, which together form an admirable paradigm of what a perfect, even holy and therefore moral, personality should be. In that sense music is an "amalgamated gesture," a comprehensive expression of all the best that is hoped for in a perfected human personality, one possessing moral maturity.

Music, with all the effort and art that go into its composition and execution, is further a pattern for the freedom and effort required in a man aiming to be moral, whole, integrated. Both strive "for the same type of superiority to coincidence" (page 43). Music and a moral life are, neither of them, accidents but achievements requiring the utilization of human intelligence and will. Here is sounded a more Western than Taoist note. Does this not repeat and fortify, in the face of other currents, Hesse's dedication to spirit, Geist, even to rationality?

In a later discussion about music, evoked by Knecht's poem "Steps," Tegularius objects to ascribing such an educative or instructive power to music. Of the poem wherein he reads this, he says:

> For moral effect it puts music and life on the same level, which is at once questionable and contestable: it makes out of an amoral and natural driving power, of which music is the mainspring, a 'life' which, through a summons, through commands and good doctrines, is designed to educate and develop us. . . . (page 338).

This is least raises the question of whether or not Knecht is putting too great a weight on music. In his own defense, it should be added, the Magister tells Tegularius that the poem, while employing a musical allegory, is more the recollection of an experience than purely of music (page 338).

As noted earlier the more general claim made for music, that it fosters piety and serenity, is probably more easily digested simply because the claim is less specific. With Tegularius most are more willing to concede a praise of music as typifying "serenity and resolution," "flexibility and unceasing determination and its readiness to hurry forward and abandon the first realm or section of space that it has occupied" (pages 337, 338). Music is called in to serve as an analogy for the constant transcendence of any one moment or any apparent self-realization for which Hesse so often calls. The forward movement, dynamism, of music aptly illustrates this "transcendence," so easily recalling us to Romantic Irony.

Above all else the emphasis is on the serenity which Knecht attributes to the all-pervasive influence of music and sees shining through the transfigured Music Master:

> . . . as a musician and Music Master he had chosen music as the way to the highest goal of man, to inner freedom, to purity and perfection; as though he had done nothing else since then but let himself become more and more impregnated with music. . . . until he was now only a symbol, an apparition, a personification of music. . . . (page 235).

These reflections on the Music Master follow Knecht's visit to him after being apprised of his impending death. Their meeting is odd: the Music Master greets Knecht by name; Knecht speaks volubly, asking questions, talking, presumably, of matters of interest to both of them; the Music Master says nothing, merely smiles kindly. Finally Knecht is granted a few words from him: "You are tiring yourself, Joseph" (page 232). These are said in "infinite friendliness" and "as though he had been watching me for a long time at too strenuous a task and wished to rebuke me" (page 232). It dawns on Knecht that this is a time, not for words, but for drinking in the atmosphere and aura of this saint; serenity and calm are his marks; he lives away from speech and thought in music and unity. Knecht realizes too that the Music Master's smile was in the nature of a deprecation of Knecht's seriousness, concern, even agitation, his granting so much importance to so many things. The Music Master is to Knecht what Mozart was to Haller: a teacher, better, an exemplar, of detached and loving serenity, of the realization of the relativity and game-like character of all human activity, the spirit of The Magic Flute.

Here, as in Steppenwolf, the ideal, serenity, humor, whatever it be called, is not to be captured in words and thought, only in the spirit of something as glorious and light as The Magic Flute or in the face of the Music Master. After the Music Master's few and simple words to him, Knecht says:

> I . . . succeeded in controlling my efforts to involve him in conversation and in remaining silent, but also in repressing my desire to fathom and profit by the secret of this silent man through the medium of words and conversation (page 235).

Once he is willing to cease attempting to penetrate conceptually the Music Master's secret and, instead, ready to bask in his radiance he has, in this vision of serenity and piety, "the most remarkable and wonderful experience that I have ever known" (page 232). The essential content of this experience is, once again as with the Immortals in Steppenwolf, the realization that life is best viewed and lived in a state beyond striving, with detachment and serenity, the gifts of great music to its servitors.

Knecht, in that conversation with Plinio wherein the two renew their friendship with such great effect on both of their lives, commends this serenity as one of the ideal qualities to be found in the "true bead-player" (page 287). Not all, of course, realize it; some bead-players may be frivolous, dilettantes; some are pseudo-serene (page 286). But--and the whole matter is strongly analogous to the Christian concept of sainthood--some do actualize fully this serenity, this Castalian perfection: "I have known one of them," the Music Master (page 286). Such serenity, he says, is his "highest and noblest aim" (page 286). Though the Music Master stands out in some isolation from much of the narrative in *Magister Ludi*, he embodies Castalian perfection. Knecht says this is composed of three elements: the cult of truth (science--*Wissenschaft*) (GS, vi, page 420), the cult of or reverence for the beautiful and the contemplative care of the spirit (meditation) (page 287). These seem to be the elements that combine in the serenity which is the ideal result of the influence of music. This serenity, again, is further specified in language as:

> naught else but courage--a serene, smiling, striding and dancing amidst the terrors and flames of the world, the festive offering of a sacrifice (page 288).

Is it here, in music, if anywhere in this novel, that Hesse sees a satisfying reconciliation of opposites, his constant desire? This smiling and dancing amid the terrors of the world--is this not a kind of detachment placing one to some degree above the essential dichotomy of good and evil? Or it can, of course, be interpreted as a kind of acceptance--a realization that this world and life are full of terrors and that once evil is recognized as part of the whole, one can still smile and dance. Music, classical music, with its constant juxtaposition of harmony and dissonance, its contrasts, all contributing to an overall effect of beauty and serenity, may be the most apt expression or symbol of the ideal of harmony that propels both Castalia and Joseph Knecht.

In this apotheosis of music, associated so particularly with the Music Master, there is a recurrence to the exalted position given music and its master, Mozart, in *Steppenwolf*. In *Magister Ludi*, however, music as an ideal picture of this transcendent serenity has

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gained by being delineated in the features of the Music Master and to a lesser degree in Knecht's attempts to articulate what music is and does. As the earlier discussion of this present novel has implied, music does retreat to the background in much of the narrative; yet it may still have a unifying function. Knecht's final act of diving to his death in the cold water out of obedience to his ideal may be the crowning deed in his emulation of the Music Master's spirit and his injunction to live the truth. It is a gesture, that word used before in reference to music as epitomizing ideal human behaviour, a gesture in which Knecht's ideal of service comes to actual fruition, is realized in practice. The Magister's earlier words to Pinio might well be used to describe his final moment as they were originally used to define the serenity of music. It is "naught else but courage--a serene, smiling striding and dancing amidst the terrors and flames of the world, the festive offering of a sacrifice" (page 288).

Conclusion

When Magister Ludi is evaluated in toto from the viewpoint of its contribution to Hesse's developing delineation of man's rapprochement with life and self, certain affirmations stand out. The serenity of a contemplative spirit educated by music is commended. Similarly he who completes and crowns a contemplative life with out-going action, a serving of the fruits of that life to mankind, to another person, is commended. Detachment is good; involvement is good. The novel spends a good deal of time on the Bead Game and its accompaniments, this musical-mathematical synthesis of all disciplines and wisdom. Elsewhere in the same work the value of such human accomplishments is

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seriously questioned.

Castalia, whatever its limitations and faults, is the attempted embodiment of a great harmonization and the source of a kind of secular sanctity. Yet the world outside it is of enough value for the Magister Ludi to abandon Castalia for the life of a school teacher. *Geist*, spirit, has presided over the building up of the Bead Game and the choice of apt music; yet *Natur*, the life of the senses, the world Designori represents, is where the model Castalian, Joseph Knecht, is to find fulfillment. The story of Dasa ends with this Indian counterpart of Knecht turning his back on the world of *Natur*, *Maya*, to serve Yogi; the story of Magister Knecht ends with him turning his back on Castalia to give his all, even his life, for the boy Tito.

Very possibly the Western reader's difficulty with all these opposites may be due to Hesse's intention in Eastern, even Taoist, fashion, to say that all are good in their time and place. Westerners have tended to gravitate to exclusive absolutes. Judaic religion and Greek philosophy have conspired to produce a civilization that distinguishes, judges, divides and chooses. Hesse has said that Chinese thought became more and more important to him as he grew older and in this work the Taoists in the person of Chuang Tzu were among his favorites. Possibly a key to much of Hesse's thought in this novel may be found in what Thomas Merton terms the key to Chuang Tzu's thought:

> The key to Chuang Tzu's thought is the complementarity of opposites, and this can be seen only when one grasps the central 'pivot' of Tao which passes squarely through both 'Yes' and 'No,' 'I' and 'Not-I'. Life is a continual develop-

> ment. All beings are in a state of flux. Chuang Tzu would have agreed with Herakleitos. What is impossible today may suddenly become possible tomorrow. What is good and pleasant today may, tomorrow, become evil and odious. What seems right from one point of view may, when seen from a different aspect, manifest itself as completely wrong.
>
> What, then, should the wise man do? Should he simply remain indifferent and treat right and wrong, good and bad, as if they were all the same? Chuang Tzu would be the first to deny that they were the same. But in so doing, he would refuse to grasp one or the other and cling to it as to an absolute. When a limited and conditioned view of 'good' is erected to the level of an absolute, it immediately becomes an evil, because it excludes certain complementary elements which are required if it is to be fully good. To cling to one partial view, one limited and conditioned opinion, and to treat this as the ultimate answer to all questions is simply to 'obscure the Tao' and make oneself obdurate in error.[13]

Words especially are accomplices in this business of excluding opposites; the truth is to be lived rather than transcribed or uttered--to echo the Music Master. Without belittling Hesse perhaps it can be said of him as one scrutinizes this enigmatic book:

> The men of old
> Took all they really knew
> With them to the grave.
> And so, Lord, what you are reading there
> Is only the dirt they left behind them.[14]

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[13] *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 30.

[14] Merton, *Ibid*., p. 80.

CHAPTER V

Hesse's Theology: An Analysis and Description of a Man's Way to Wholeness and Serenity

I. The General Character of Hesse's Theology

This final chapter will briefly note the characteristics of Hesse's doctrine of personal development, his theology of "humanization,"[1] and its relation to that part of theology known traditionally as spiritual or mystical (I). Following this is a recapitulation of the teaching implicit in the ten novels on how this humanization might be achieved and a summary of Hesse's abiding convictions on the matter (II). The final section evaluates Hesse's teaching from the viewpoint of the present writer's understanding of Christian theology (III).

From a traditional Christian viewpoint the terms that come to mind in regard to Hesse's teaching about the self in the novels just analyzed are "theology of the spiritual life," "the way of perfection," the "path to holiness" and even possibily "mysticism." Elements of such language he himself uses at times, e.g., the Music Master in Magister Ludi is spoken of in terms of sanctity. And the term "spiritual" has a particular suitability if Hesse's commendation of spirit, Geist, is recalled. The term seems in Hesse to refer to the highest intellectual and creative activities of a human being, to that in him which enables him to transcend the particularities of time and space, environment and education and which links him at its best to the All; it is resonant with the implication of the words soul and mind. At times, despite his wide-ranging eclecticism, Hesse is willing to append the adjective Christian to his thinking.[2] In any case, what is usually termed "theology of the spiritual life" is, for the most part, congruent with Hesse's concerns, the "teaching" of his novels. Like this theology which, in view of its practical matter might better be termed a science or an art, Hesse's works are occupied with the very basic and all-embracing problem of the perfection of the self, its development, its relation to other realities, viz., the world, God and other men.

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[1] It may be good to emphasize here once more that theology as used of the teaching drawn from from Hesse's works is obviously not formal theology. The theology spoken of is the effort here made to systematize and synthesize Hesse's insights on religious matters, especially those dealing with man's perfection, as found in the ten novels.

Evelyn Underhill states the broad meaning and characteristics of mysticism as: "the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order" and "a genuine life process and not an intellectual speculation."[3] By this standard Hesse's works may pass as at least inchoate mysticism. That they are not merely intellectual or fanciful speculation is attested by Hesse's statement that his books are all formulations of his soul's history and take their departure from this concern.[4]

This last point, that Hesse's works take their departure from his soul's quest, is a basic quality of his theology; whatever its

[2] Maurice Colleville, "Le problème religieux dans le vie et l'oeuvre de Hermann Hesse," pp. 137-139.

[3] *Mysticism*, pp. xiv, xv.

[4] "Ein Stückchen Theologie," p. 740.

psychological basis, his approach to the problem of how to live, how the self is to be realized, begins with the self and never loses sight of it. In terms of a distinction of religions and, implicitly, of theologies made by R. C. Zaehner, Hesse's theology would fall clearly under the heading of religions of the Indian tradition.[5] Professor Zaehner sees the world-religions as essentially owing their origin to two backgrounds; the Judaic and the Indian. The former includes, of course, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The second includes Hinduism, Buddhism and the other religions of the Orient. Judaic-originated religions are centered around a transcendent God who addresses men and commands them through his prophets and representatives. The movement is primarily from God to man. Religions of the Indian stream, on the contrary, "start with the idea of the human soul;" "they are interested in the realization here and now of a state of existence in which time and space and causation are transcended and obliterated; they aim at the realization, the felt experience of immortality" (Zaehner, pages 16, 17). "On the one hand you find prophets claiming to speak in God's name, on the other sages interested only in piercing through to the immortal ground of the soul" (Zaehner, page 20). On these terms Hesse's *point of departure* readily classifies his theology as Indian. Logically enough Yoga and meditation combine with psychology in his novels to unfold the self and solve its problems. What has been recorded earlier of Hesse's indebtedness to the East could certainly account for the similarity of methodology.

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[5] *The Comparison of Religions* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), pp. 16, 17, 20.

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Other influences than those of the East are, however, equally present in Hesse's life and thought and in collusion with the self-centered starting point of his thought. In an earlier chapter it was noted how infinitely productive the romantics found the "Ich," the ego. For this movement or style of thought, so obviously part of Hesse's intellectual inheritance, the ego was the one fixed star around which all else may revolve. This alone could account for the egocentric nature of Hesse's religious thinking. Yet there is still the third great influence in Hesse's background, Pietism, and it too was a movement, in religion, recalling Lutherans from preoccupation with abstract and scholastic theology to a theology of personal salvation, very much dependent on the individual's experience of God. In place of theological formulae which they felt were usurping the place of genuine Christian experience the Pietists emphasized the confirmatory power of personal experience. Not only the most freely chosen influences in Hesse's life, romanticism and the thought of the East, but even this influence which he appeared to reject, all left their mark. Heta Paaten emphasizes well that, whatever Hesse's abjuration of parental Pietism meant, it did not erase the typically Pietist preoccupation with individual salvation, para-Christian as it may be in Hesse.[6]

Hesse's theology is primarily, then, personal and individualist, starting with the self, Indian, if you will; equally the content of this theology is notably traditional. Indications of Lutheran and

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[6] "Die pietistische Tradition der Familien Gundert und Hesse."

Pietist theology have been noted earlier; Hesse, however, regards even these Lutheran-appearing traits as common to all religions, a sort of universal human tradition. Reference has been made earlier to an essay by Hesse which is singularly appropriate to this dissertation and serves to complement the material in the novels. It appeared in 1932 entitled "Ein Stückchen Theologie" ("A Bit of Theology").[7] This essay makes explicit and a bit more systematic a conception of human spiritual development that is illustrated in the novels. What Hesse sees as common to both European or Christian as well as Indian tradition are stages in man's development, his humanization (Menschwerdung, page 736). Three stages, described by Hesse in a number of ways, are recognized: 1) a stage of innocence, naiveté, paradise or childhood; 2) a stage where the demands of culture, morality, society--Paul and Luther might say the Law--beget a striving through works and activity for redemption only to culminate in guilt and despair; 3) the last stage is either defeat or what is described variously as grace, redemption, faith or awakening (pages 736,738). As Hesse says, to Westerners the most familiar example of this is the way from Adam and paradise to Christian redemption (page 739). Siddhartha and Steppenwolf most clearly exemplify or refer to this framework.

Hesse's theology has been characterized thus far--in its overall perspective--as individualist and traditional, in the sense above. A third characteristic of Hesse's religious thought or, better, his

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[7] Apparently it was republished in 1947 as "Stufen der Menschwerdung."

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religious attitude, is made explicit in "Ein Stückchen Theologie," a characteristic more readily divined than articulated by the reader of the novels. The German for this note is *Frömmigkeit*; provisionally let it be piety or devoutness in English. What is meant most plainly appears in the three *Incarnations* at the end of *Magister Ludi*, in the whole tone of *Siddhartha* and to different degrees and in other ways in *Steppenwolf* and *Narcissus and Goldmund*. In one way it should be almost tautological to speak of this as characterizing any theology since it seems so basic to religion yet our separation of life from knowledge allows for a theology which may not be qualifiable as "devout." Hesse shows his preference for devout theology and religion in contrasting devout Pietist types with liberal rationalists in *Beneath the Wheel*, for example.

The full meaning of the term *Frömm[illegible]keit* is evident in the second half of the little essay in theology by Hesse. After describing the steps in humanization common to all religions, something he considers an indisputable truth, he speaks of a more personal preference, a tendency to see men as belonging to either of two types in their basic attitude, *Der Vernünftige* and *Der Fromme* (pages 741 ff). As in *Steppenwolf* Hesse is at pains to deny to this division an absolute authority; it merely seems to him to correspond to one aspect of reality, at least at moments. He realizes men are more diverse and not totally confinable within these distinctions. A listing of some of the traits of the two will clarify the distinction. *Der Vernünftige*, the rational mind, meaning the man of this disposition, trusts in human reason, progress, man's ability to control the earth; he feels justified in commanding and organizing and striving for power; he is systematic. Der Fromme, the devout believer,[8] is reverent toward nature and what is above him; he does not consider reason a sufficient guide; he trusts in the author of nature and believes in service of the earth; he draws away from power and is inclined to play, pietism and "navel-gazing" (pages 741-745). Hesse feels himself essentially one of the devout believers despite, as he says, possessing at times the most unpleasant traits of the rational mind. The latter had its exemplification in his youthful free thinking and revolt against Pietism, a revolt, as all this suggests, not totally abiding or formative of his character. Hesse's theology, then, is: 1) individualistic--he is pre-eminently engaged in detailing--in fiction--the way of an individual to salvation, not the way of a community or church or social body of any kind; individualistic should also carry some indication of the theology's origin in Hesse's own life; 2) traditional--the lives of the fictional protagonists of the novels who reflect Hesse's own odyssey all presume the universal human experience of innocence, guilt and redemption (or defeat); 3) the theology of a devout believer--this theology owes more to an openness to all of reality and a trust in its source than to any effort at rational

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[8] Devout believer seems a better translation in terms of the context Hesse provides than "pious" or simply "devout" which have come to suggest weak or sentimental religiosity in English. Believer obviously does not mean one who subscribes to a particular historical creed but describes one whose religious outlook is characterized by reverence and trust over against a simply rational mind primarily concerned with power and control.

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reduction of and control of reality. These three notes refer to the style or perspective of Hesse's theology. The content of that theology is almost totally what seems best covered by the terms found in "Ein Stückchen Theologie," Menschwerdung and Individuation, the stages of which were outlined above. From what Hesse says in that essay and the sum of his effort in the novels these terms appear to be interchangeable and to mean the whole process of becoming truly human, humanization, or the process of bringing to reality or realization all that lies potential in a man. What follows in the remainder of this work will be an attempt at some systematization of the material on this theme already uncovered in the analyses of the ten novels. The order will be:

- II. Humanization in the ten novels:
    - A. a survey of the form or realization this takes in the novels with reference to parallel material in theology and spirituality
    - B. a summary of the constant or abiding, as over against temporary and rejected, principles exhibited in these works
- III. A critical summary of the positive insights and deficiencies of this theology from the viewpoint of this writer:
    - A. positive insights
    - B. deficiencies

II. Humanization

Ultimately humanization, Menschwerdung, means a kind of sainthood, sanctity or perfection, most compellingly and reverently pictured by Hesse in the Music Master of Magister Ludi, in which opposites are reconciled, tensions resolved and, more positively, a total harmony or serenity is attained. At one time this humanization will be sought in a Promethean effort at total actualization of every human power; at another time the accent is on a more acquiescent and less Pelagian posture. The end envisioned is invariably presented in categories or modes that can be called aesthetic in distinction to ethical or moral modes.[9] Perfection, self-realization, whatever it be called, is set forth in terms of a generally satisfying, overall harmonious image of a man or of a composed rapprochement with life and all its forces. Hesse does not propose solutions wherein the quality of the individual's behavior is the all-important criterion. This is not entirely a matter of indifference to him but it is by no means in the forefront: a harmonious resolution of oppositions and disparate forces is the prime modality in which he sees his ideal.

In common with the ethical view, however, Hesse's own approach, too, presupposes a fault, flaw or fall of original nature in man that must be overcome; as will appear, this flaw is seen to consist in a split that runs through creation. The ethical or moral approach sees the fault as being overcome through moral effort and regeneration, often through obedience to commandments and behavior motivated by love. In Hesse's aesthetic view the ultimate overcoming of the

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[9] Aesthetic as used throughout this chapter refers to those ways of conceiving or treating human development or perfection which emphasize the serene and harmonious end product; ethical or moral is used here to refer to ways of viewing human development which put the emphasis on the behavior and conduct, largely in terms of good and evil, necessary for the attainment of the goal. The ethical or moral view is most explicit in affirming the existence of evil and the necessity for exercise of the will in opposing it.

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primal fault is a reuniting of what has been separated and ruptured. This corresponds closely to Christian theology's conception of the work of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of Pentecost, a recovering of lost unity, though, it should be noted, the social side is not strongly emphasized in Hesse. In the moral or ethical view some such code as the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes is put forward as a guide and rule for overcoming the fall. For Hesse, the fall or split in creation will be overcome only in some all-embracing synthesis of disparities or reconciliation of opposites.

In searching for such a solution, almost from the beginning of his fiction writing, Hesse oscillates to a large degree between two divergent procedures. One undertakes the herculean labor of consciously developing, unfolding, all the self's potential, to the point even of bringing unconscious but relevant material to the light of day. Or one really allows oneself to surrender or let go of the self, confident that a higher power will use that act to confer true actuality on the self. M. C. D'Arcy, in a book which touches many of Hesse's concerns, states this basic distinction in terms of two opposing loves in man.[10] One is self-regarding, attached to the world of reason and intent on its own self-realization; the other is self-sacrificing, more often related to the irrational element in man, and ever seeking fusion with the beloved, surrender, death to self (D'Arcy, page 284). This dichotomy corresponds broadly to the two poles of Hesse's plans for the self.

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[10] *The Mind and Heart of Love* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956).

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Hesse himself, in a letter, relates these two disparate tendencies to different ages of man and suggests a harmonization of the two:

> Das Bedürfnis der Jugend ist: sich selber ernst nehmen zu können. Das Bedürfnis des Alters ist: sich selber opfern können, weil über ihm etwas steht, was er ernst nimmt. Ich formuliere nicht gern Glaubenssätze, aber ich glaube wirklich: ein geistiges Leben musz zwischen diesen beiden Polen ablaufen und spielen. Denn Aufgabe, Sehnsucht und Pflicht der Jugend ist das Werden, Aufgabe des reifen Menschen ist das Sichweggeben oder, wie die deutschen Mystiker es einst nannten, das 'Entwerden.' Man musz erst ein voller Mensch, eine wirkliche Persönlichkeit geworden sein und die Leiden dieser Individuation erlitten haben, ehe man das Opfer dieser Persönlichkeit bringen kann.[11]

The two poles represent opposed movements of the self but they are reconciled by Hesse, as a general rule in which he believes, when he says that taking oneself seriously, developing, perfecting the self, is a necessary preliminary if one is to be able to fulfill the "calling of maturity," to be able to surrender oneself and one's strivings.

In what follows immediately a brief synopsis of the problem of the self as it is seen and solved in the ten novels is given. The labels or headings given to the various solutions are the author's; they have their basis in Hesse's works but are not necessarily his words.

[11] Siegfried Unseld, ed. Das Werk von Hermann Hesse--Ein Brevier, p. 13. Translation:

> The inmost urge of youth is to take oneself seriously; the urge of old age is to be able to sacrifice oneself, for above (old age) is a power to be taken seriously. I do not like to formulate dogmas but my firm belief is that a spiritual life must develop and move between these two poles. For the calling, the yearning, the duty of youth is development; the calling of maturity is to abandon and surrender oneself or, in the words of German mystics, (Entwerden) to be no longer concerned with 'becoming.' Unless maturity and a true personality are attained and the pains of this individuation endured, there is nothing human to offer.

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For the sake of some simplicity particular novels or sets of novels are treated under one particular term, i.e., self-discovery. From what has preceded in this work it should be obvious that no one novel usually sets out to propound simply one of the alternatives. Other alternatives may be present; but it seems justifiable to simplify as is done here for clarity about what each alternative means. Six alternatives are apparent: self-discovery, self-affirmation, self-forgetfulness, self-dissolution, self-knowledge and self-surrender.

A. The Ten Novels

1) Self-discovery and self-definition

The four pre-World War I novels, Peter Camenzind, Beneath the Wheel, Gertrude and Rosshalde, are relatively poor soil from which to expect the sort of harvest aimed at in this study. Hesse pictures himself in a series of characters who, reflecting his own youth, are most uncertain of themselves, though preoccupied with themselves in a quite romantic manner. They are, in fact, locked within themselves in great part. Peter Camenzind cuts off some minimal attempts at developing and breaking out of himself--though it must be noted that fate too did not deal kindly with him--and returns to his mountain village; the musician Kuhn (Gertrude) is a sorry dreamer, unable to act forcefully, a spectator at life's theatre, feeling hemmed in by external forces and circumstances. One of the few hopeful signs in these works of anything beyond a rather self-pitying acquiescence in circumstance is Veraguth's decision at the end of Rosshalde to extricate himself from a wretchedly unhappy married life, this as the result of his friend's prodding. Self-discovery is only usable of these

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characters insofar as they are discovering, becoming somewhat conscious of, their locked-in state. They know they are alienated and ineffective; that is their minimal glory for the most part. Self-knowledge in any more profound sense of the word will have to wait for later works.

Beneath the Wheel, despite strictures made about its derivative and excessive character, offers a suggestion of developing self-definition at least. Hans Giebenrath, under the tutelage of his fellow student Hermann Heilner, is awakened to a sense of his oppression by a rigid school system, and narrow and materialist bourgeois elders. His youthful attempt at salvaging the personal and spontaneous aspects of life from these hands is thwarted, crushed "beneath the wheel." Yet the attempt is significant as a gesture symbolic of later and more successful attempts to define the self in opposition to the bourgeosie, governments, institutions and tradition; such efforts are especially apparent in Demian, Siddhartha, Steppenwolf and Magister Ludi. Love, too, momentarily opens the eyes of most of these protagonists to wider vistas, to self-completion,to a worthy focus for energies and powers.

In sum, these early works provide the antecedents of themes developed and made more dominant in later works but provide little material themselves for a theory of self-realization.

2) Self-affirmation and self-realization

With a briskness and even defiance that is in distinct contrast with the languid and passive mood of the first novels, Demian proclaims a carrying out of the Nietzschean superman ideal. The destination is a realization of one's uniqueness and self-hood--Be thyself!--ultimately to the point of isolation. The origins of all this in Hesse's life and times have been pointed out earlier. Since "no man has ever been entirely and completely himself," Demian, one may say, is determined to help Sinclair be one of the first. Here in Demian the effort is called becoming human. The attainment of this goal involves an almost scientific effort to know the self entirely, including a bringing to the surface of the unconscious, and to accept and will whatever is of nature or temperament as one's fate. Negatively it means the calculated rejection of tradition, church, parental authority, bourgeois morality, all that would provide a ready-made pattern for the self. Obviously such an end, if it is attainable, demands a willingness to stand alone, like Christ or Nietzsche as the book's characters say. Not surprisingly Hesse found this impossible and goes from this ideal to other experiments in succeeding works.

Demian had great appeal for post-War German youth and still today strikes a most sympathetic chord in many young people. It rightly emphasizes the need to know one's own specific natural endowment and that any true identity or self must be built on this foundation and not attempted despite it. The Demian ideal strongly underlines the uniqueness of each individual, the fact that no one universal formula or series of such can serve uncritically as one's model. Young people today, so conscious of the omnipresent and, to them, oppressive force of technology, society and government, gladly welcome a call and a program for realizing and affirming their own particular personality. Though many young activists believe in and practice a moralism and puritanism equal to anything in the past, many of their contemporaries see the amoralism, the beyond-good-and-evil stance, of Demian as another element in their liberation from the past and the given present.

Like Hesse and his heroes the generation which admires Demian so much must perforce learn by experience and experiment the limitations of this ideal and of the human capacity to fulfill it. Perhaps the only possible results of pursuing this ideal are exhibited in Nietzsche and Christ: either madness or divinity. For Hesse, Demian was a strident interlude and an experiment leaving a residue of lasting values after its essential goal was rejected.

In the analysis of Demian it was pointed out that the ideals of community and love are not entirely omitted from the novel, but that they hardly receive adequate treatment or real integration into the ideal.

3) Self-forgetfulness

Despair, in Hesse's outline of the stages of man's spiritual development, ordinarily follows on the attempt to fulfill a code or ideal found impossible. The Demian code, self-made though it may have been, induced such despair and a search for another route to redemption in the author's quest. With qualifications it can be said that in the next novel (though there were other approaches in intervening works not considered here) Hesse has gone far in the opposite direction, from self-affirmation and self-creation to an immersion of the self in something other. One sees in Demian a rather assertive, masculine effort at realizing the self by will power and in Siddhartha an approach more often linked with the feminine element in man's psyche, a longing for a self-surrender to something greater and all-encompassing.

The final answer given in Siddhartha is, again, sought and found as the result of Siddhartha's despair over his previous failures and his immersion in the world of desire and wealth. Three or four forms of self-forgetting emerge in the course of the tale.

a) There is a forgetting or losing of self on the part of Siddhartha in his anxious love for his son by Kamala. This should be familiar to Western readers in its likeness to the ideal of much traditional Christian hagiography and to the ideal of an Incarnational Christianity. There one finds himself, realizes himself, by an imitation of and participation in Christ's entrance into the world of human suffering and evil to do good, to spend himself in love. This is briefly commended in Siddhartha but the boy flees leaving the hero bereft of this opportunity. b) A similar though less passionate kind of love is made available to him when he takes Vasudeva's place as ferryman and settles down to a tranquil life of service to others in that capacity.

But the more definitive self-forgetting here is found in the Indian and Taoist conclusion of the work. c) In the Hindu terminology of the two selves Siddhartha finds his true self (Atman, the non-empirical ego underlying the superficial ego) by immersion in all that is, in the All, Brahman. In an experience of oneness with nature, with all reality, Siddhartha feels himself attaining Brahman--reuniting his individual soul with the world-soul of which it is a part and from which it has been separated by birth. d) The earlier analysis of Siddhartha argued that most basically the final solution, the final self-forgetting, was characteristically Taoist. The flowing, yielding, yet relentless character of the river embodies the Taoist view of what disposition man should make of the self. He should realize its harmony with all that is and find peace in this accepting and non-striving ideal.

The self-forgetting, self-losing, solution proposed in this novel is close to the higher aspirations of various religions, Christianity included. There seem to be a number of realities in which the self may lose itself. 1) It may lose itself in nature; 2) or in Brahman understood as underlying and embracing all of nature; 3) it may lose itself by being reabsorbed into the unconscious, a returning to a preconscious state; 4) it may lose itself in union with a personal God wherein it retains, however, its personal identity. What is especially commended in the concluding portion of the novel is a Taoist version of the first, the experience of oneness with all of nature, an experience, really, of natural mysticism; also envisioned is the second type of self-forgetting where the self feels itself at rest because it has realized its primordial identity with Brahman, the spirit sustaining and living in all reality.

The great popularity of Siddhartha currently in the United States may be due to its supremely eclectic character which guarantees that everyone will find something there to his taste. More specifically it satisfies what must be a fairly widespread hunger for an existence amplified and deepened by a sense of participation in something higher

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and greater than the self. Or, to return to the Taoist statement of the matter, just the release from self-concern there implied and the harmony with what is may be the attraction. Thomas Merton lists among the needs he detects in modern man a need for:

> liberation from his inordinate self-consciousness, his monumental self-awareness, his obsession with self-affirmation, so that he may enjoy the freedom from concern that goes with being simply what he is and accepting things as they are in order to work with them as he can.[12]

Ideally, men must strive for adequate self-realization *and also* somehow, for release from self-absorption in a wider life in harmony with nature and God.

The doctrine that the self must realize itself through union with something greater has links with Western spirituality. Differences between Christianity and the Oriental influences, Indian especially, which Hesse has absorbed are largely differences between traditional Christianity and the earlier, often monistic, strands of Hinduism and that stratum called Vedanta; the conception of God is the problem in great part. The personal character of the Judaeo-Christian God makes for a different type of union with him. Yet this latter union too can be spoken of in terms of the discovery of the true self and this is somewhat of a commonplace among Western mystics. Thomas Merton may speak for them:

> . . . in Christian mystical tradition the identity of the mystic is never purely and simply the mere empirical ego--still less the neurotic and narcissistic self--but the 'person' who is identified with Christ, one with Christ.

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[12] *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, p. 31.

'I live now not I but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20) (Zen and the Birds of Appetite, p. 75).[13]

4) Self-dissolution

Elements of other ways to self-realization are present in the sprawling jumble that is Steppenwolf: self-forgetting appears once again; a lofty, detached stance for the self, exemplified in "The Immortals" is also prominent. The former has already been touched on and the latter solution will be more properly discussed under the treatment of Magister Ludi.

The harried hero of Steppenwolf, Harry Haller, in his fashion follows the Demian ideal without the satisfaction promised. He has reached a pitch of self-hood where he feels alone and uncomprehended, totally wretched. He is no Christ nor Nietzsche. His individuation, as Hesse calls it here, only brings him to constant thoughts of suicide, the second stage therefore in man's development, despair. The answer to his problem, proposed to him in detail by a variety of mentors and in The Treatise, lies in the dissolution of this unendurable self. There is more too, of course, pointing in the direction of the solution personified in the Music Master of the last novel. A kind of sovereign relaxation in just being, a detachment and lightness of touch especially shown in Mozart, is also part of the suggested cure. But this elusive ideal must wait. More particularly here there is a) some continuity with the solution proferred in

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[13] See also: Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 67; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Divine Milieu (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 89; R. C. Zaehner, Mysticism Sacred and Profane (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 15, 63 ff and 102.

Siddhartha and b) some development of it.

a) The continuity with Siddhartha comes in the renewed advocacy of self-forgetfulness in terms of a return of Atman to Brahman. In contrast with the more gentle letting-go of the self recommended in Siddhartha, Steppenwolf becomes fairly vehement about the necessity for the disappearance of the self. This will be accomplished by the removal of all barriers between the self and the rest of reality; Atman must overcome the limitations of a temporal personality, the empirical self, in order to be merged truly once again with the formless All which embraces all that is. This attack on the idea of the self or personality as the great obstacle to reunion with Brahman, the All, leads over into the--to Westerners--even more extreme denial of any reality to the self.

b) This latter, a form of the Buddhist teaching of Anatta, no-self, seems almost the revengeful cry of the tortured personality of a Steppenwolf. The Treatise gets down to particulars in urging on Harry Haller as the answer to his problems an identification of his self with more and more aspects and modes of reality, such a stretching, in fact, that the self as unitary disappears by force of being divided and subdivided into ever more minute segments. Only this way can it share in and be a part of, or better, identical with the all-inclusive Brahman. An inflation of the self to include all things so that it is no longer able to be distinguished from anything that is--this is another statement of this ideal. This teaching seems conflated with the Buddhist conception of Anatta, no-self, according to which the self we are so conscious of is an illusion to be overcome.

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As if to distinguish all this from any mere falling back into undifferentiated Nature, its proponents insist that this goal is ahead, before one, not achievable by a return to childhood or the womb. This of course, is part of the problem in understanding it: how is this different from a complete return to the nature from which we were drawn?

There is no simple answer to this question. Orientalist and Christian R. C. Zaehner tends to agree with psychiatrist C. G. Jung in seeing this goal of identification with the All as corresponding to an identification with Jung's "collective unconscious" (Mysticism Sacred and Profane, page 63). This latter, according to Jung, is "the vast sea of common race experience" in turn called "cosmic consciousness" by some and "mind at large" by Aldous Huxley in reference to his mescalin experiences (Zaehner, page 43). This hardly seems to be a going "ahead" but a reversion to origins. On the other hand, of course, for Hindus of Vedantin persuasion this All is Brahman, the god above or beyond all other gods. The obsession with the Great Mother which marks the next novel will in a sense obscure this still further though ultimately, it seems, serve to justify the view of Zaehner and Jung.

All in all, the dissolution urged so strongly in Steppenwolf seems, at the very least, a too severe denigration of the self by the criteria of Western Christian theology and experience. Hesse himself does not seem to have clung ultimately to this difficult position so contrary, one would think, to his intense awareness of the self. The entire odyssey of Hesse's self as pictured in his novels argues that he would understand the injunction to love his neighbor as himself and value the promise of Christ that he came to bring men more abundant life rather than to diminish it (John 10:10). Self-dissolution and a denial of the existence of the self seem to have been too radical, too contrary to his experience, to satisfy Hesse ultimately. This is, like its opposite extreme in Demian, perhaps a necessary experiment for Hesse but not the last word.

5) Self-knowledge and self-submersion

Narcissus and Goldmund is notable for bringing to conspicuous definition two themes less discernible in earlier works. a) The first is the view of the self as the field whereon is played out the constant struggle for dominance by two contenders most constantly labeled Geist and Natur. The first represents the spirit or mind in man, the rational and ordering element in the psyche. Natur stands for the life of the senses and feelings, ever hoping to lead their own life and to draw the person to the irrational. b) From Natur flows the great longing to be returned to total union with its ground conceived of as the Great or Universal Mother, the amoral force or power behind the self's less accountable impulses, instincts and desires. What is stressed throughout Narcissus and Goldmund certainly has elements of self-affirmation but, since that has been dealt with elsewhere, the novel will be treated here as exemplifying two other distinctive goals of Hessean probing, self-knowledge and self-submersion. Awkward as the last term may appear it accurately expresses the motif embodied in the Great Mother, the desire of the self to be merged with or in the Mother.

a) Self-knowledge appears appropriate as a description of the end result of Hesse's analysis in fictional form of the two fundamental tendencies he is constantly driven to regard as most generally explanatory of human behavior, Geist and Natur. This convenient model helps Hesse bring to awareness the primary divergent propensities he feels struggling within himself for mastery. As the earlier detailed analysis demonstrates, the terms are by no means clear-cut powers standing side by side but more like liquids of a high viscosity but yet able to intermingle. Like Narcissus and Goldmund they need each other and benefit from each other. The dichotomy figures to varying degrees in the works from Demian to Magister Ludi especially.

Hesse is clearly fond of his creature Goldmund--as he came to be of Maria, Pablo and of Designori--i.e., he knows there are correspondences within himself to all that Goldmund represents: a life dedicated to the moment, sensuality, active involvement in personal relationships, a tendency to blissful forgetfulness, irresponsibility and wandering, a longing, finally, for nothing but the release of death. On the other hand, Hesse knows that the man capable of living like a hermit for several years, the student of ancient wisdom and philosophers, the devotee of classical music, is irrevocably dedicated to what Narcissus represents: cool, ordering reason; forethought and perseverance; self-discipline in the interest of personal development or spiritual growth. Further than all this, Hesse, through characters like Harry Haller and Joseph Knecht, shows himself aware that Geist is his fate; he cannot easily forego its dominance in his life and abandon himself, without considerable awkwardness, to the life of the senses. The analysis of the self in terms of this dichotomy--no matter what limitations it has and Hesse is aware of that--is a rather thoroughgoing path to self-knowledge and self-acceptance. Without this there can be no real rapprochement with life or within the self.

b) Nothing is more illustrative of Hesse's constant teasing dance around and between dichotomies than the fact that he considers Geist his métier, yet is so obviously and ardently sympathetic with Goldmund's yearning for the Great Mother. And, despite a lack of complete congruence, it is revealing to note that Goldmund has a number of traits ascribed to the "devout believer" with whom Hesse in general identifies himself. The poles in these dichotomies are not static.

In the ten novels considered here Narcissus and Goldmund marks the apogee of the Great Mother's influence. She fades out of the picture after this. But for the moment she stands for or is the goal that the child of Natur sees as most desirable. She is at least the source of Natur if not herself identical with it. Goldmund's whole longing is for a return to her; through all his wanderings he feels the call to home (Heimat) the call to his lost childhood, to the mother. It is the mating call that persists in luring him on through his many loves. In her bosom all opposites blend, all distinctions, ethical and aesthetic, are nullified, all is accepted. The self with all its tensions, responsibilities, is immersed in the indistinct night of the Mother and death. The reader is left with a final goal for the self much like that envisioned in Siddhartha and Steppenwolf under Hindu and Taoist terms. The self is to be reabsorbed into Mother, Mother Nature, where its personality with its particularities and limitations will be broken down and what remains again be a part of the Universal Mother. Submerged and dissolved will be the self in the watery depths of the Mother.

Hesse's way of stating this ideal of self-dissolution in Narcissus and Goldmund, self-dissolution in the Mother rather than in the All, reinforces the more tentative suggestion made earlier that this may be a longing more for the self's annihilation--one way out of the impossible dichotomies that straiten it--than for any type of realization, any heightened life for the self. As Goldmund on the level of human relationships is a temptation for Narcissus, it seems that Hesse too is being strongly tempted in these works to retreat from the search for an impossible synthesis of opposites and harmony of all drives to an ideal of reversion to nature, reversion to childhood really, to a state below or anterior to that where so many disparities exist and all is manifold. Or, putting Hesse in Goldmund's place, which is easily done, he is longing for a final release from loneliness; he has gone from love to love and returned never finally sated. Would not the loneliness, the yearning for perfect union so natural to mankind, be overcome if one were freed from the differentiating bonds of personality and individuality? Human love ordinarily is a union of two persons who, however intense the love, remain two persons, distinct, not totally merged. For those whose desire is infinite, who cannot accept disparity and incompleteness as their lot, the natural state of man, the temptation is to death, the longing and yearning for death that echoes through a certain strain of literature going back at least to medieval times. M. C. D'Arcy in exposing Denis de Rougemont's account of Eros and Agape and other pairings such as Eros and Logos well describes what we have in Narcissus and Goldmund. Recall the suitability of Eros as Goldmund's emblem:

> Some time or other in the theme of Eros the death note will be heard; man in love with death and with the dark goddess, and singing of the night when his soul will be fused with the object of his passion (The Mind and Heart of Love, page 350).

Plainly, the desire for union with the Great Mother is synonymous with a desire to return to an unconscious state, to be freed from the suffering and unfulfilled desire that are concomitants of consciousness and personality. Hesse's ideal in reunion with the Great Mother is fundamentally a despairing over the impossibilities attendant on human life. It is not a solution which keeps intact and situates in some higher synthesis all the oppositions of life. This latter is intimated and attempted elsewhere in these works.

6) Self-surrender and self-transcendence

The two remaining novels, Journey to the East and Magister Ludi, are, of course, once again not the sole illustrations of these ideals, but they do exemplify and articulate them with greater clarity and emphasis than the other works.

a) Self-surrender: to this should be appended for whatever precision the concept may allow: in and through service to others. The program suggested here for the self is one very early exemplified

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in Peter Camenzind's loving service of the deformed Boppi. After that, except for its appearance in Siddhartha, the ideal is in abeyance. Journey to the East offers a clue to its reappearance; there the hero whose early quest was for the Princess Fatima, surely reminiscent of the frequently met yearning for the mother, says he now needs a "stronger charm" than the image of the woman "which had haunted my youth" (pages 95, 96). This bolsters the impression that, after Narcissus and Goldmund, the longing for the Great Mother has been purged and Hesse and his heroes are on a new phase of the quest. Service, for one thing, answers to the need for a "stronger charm." Despite all its fanciful trappings, Journey to the East does quite forthrightly propose this ideal for H. H., i.e., Hermann Hesse and all his fictional creations. Leo, the servant of all the pilgrims on the journey, is content with being a servant, equivalently a "nothing," a "devout believer" type and only near the end is his identity as president of the League discovered. "Let the greater among you be as the junior, the leader as the servant" (Luke 21:26). The homage to service is not merely a matter of words but is apparent in its results in the character of Leo, the smiling, gentle and faithful servant. H. H. is given clearly to understand that his own quest for perfection, wisdom, the "journey to the East," will be satisfied if he allows Leo's servant nature to penetrate and fill his own nature. He is to decrease, Leo increase. Journey to the East clearly augurs that service is the way to full spiritual development.

No such clarity is apparent in Magister Ludi. The object of service, that to which it is directed, is obscured in various ways in this last work and even that deed which should or could bespeak so clearly that Knecht has dedicated himself completely to loving service is rendered ambiguous by its almost accidental character and by being offset by competing themes and ideals. When allowances have been made for this turbid presentation of the theme, it remains fairly clear that service is meant to be understood as formative of the good man. If it could be seen unequivocally as an act of loving devotion and sacrifice, Knecht's diving into the water after Tito would certainly be an apt exemplification of that famous lauding of love: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

b) Self-transcendence

Under terms such as serenity (Heiterkeit), Hesse's word, and detachment, the writer's, this last and ultimate way of achieving the self's development and full humanity has been described in the treatment of Magister Ludi. The perfection envisioned here points in the opposite direction from that dark yearning to be lost in the Great Mother. Geist is decisively at the helm in Magister Ludi and the harmony, so long and intensely sought, is to be found in the posture of a totally integrated personality marked, before all else, by detachment and serenity. The Bead Game itself, an intellectual synthesis, and the music of Bach, Haydn and Purcell, masters of the classical style, both reflect the ambience and level of this novel's solution. Consciousness and personality are not now being discarded or abandoned to the embrace of the Urmutter but transformed, made light and transparent, by the formative power of music, above all.

Alongside the goal of self-dissolution in Steppenwolf there is this further consummation opened to Haller's mind in the vision of the joyous and dancing Mozart and the "Immortals." The cool atmosphere in which they live and laugh is quite the opposite of the grave that Goldmund seeks for his personality. In the music of the great composers is the paradigm of the perfection which the Music Master sets before Knecht in words and life. The music of a Mozart takes reality seriously yet by removing the self to a distance, through detachment and that lightness that humor can teach, is able also to see its game-like qualities. In such music is reached and preached an acceptance of all, a harmony of opposites and a serene peace and trust which Geist has learned to the point where striving and effort give way to a quasi-natural effortlessness. When "The Immortals" deprecate Haller's over-serious mien they show this liberty and detachment of spirit. In Steppenwolf humor appears as an agent in the necessary reduction in self-importance, in teaching the self to accept reality--illustrated by Mozart playing Haydn on the radio for Harry--rather than fruitlessly to protest against it.

In proposing this state above and beyond striving, in both Steppenwolf and Magister Ludi, Hesse is being consistent with the theology of his essay where the third and final step in humanization is a "higher kind of irresponsibility" ("höheren Art von Verantwortungslosigkeit," "Ein Stückchen Theologie," page 737) or, as he says, faith. The adjective "higher" argues, as has been done here, that this state is different from a mere sinking backwards into childhood or the mother; it is, as in Christ's teaching a new kind of childlike simplicity and trust (irresponsibility) gained and accepted after struggle by an adult, not an unreflected possession. In the letter quoted on page 397 Hesse uses the term *Entwerden*, from the German mystics, to describe the ultimate task of age and one of the poles of man's spiritual life. *Entwerden* is translatable as "ceasing to be any longer concerned with 'becoming.'" The same letter emphasizes that this is no submersion in the unconscious but a transcendence of self possible only after or concomitantly with maturity, the realization of one's personality.

> Man musz erst ein voller Mensch, eine wirkliche Persönlichkeit geworden sein und die Leiden dieser Individuation erlitten haben, ehe man das Opfer dieser Persönlichkeit bringen Kann (Unseld, page 13).[14]

Entwerden is possible only when a man has made the effort, endured the pains of personality-building and has something worth offering. This position is quite consonant with the insistence of traditional mystical writers that the Illuminative and Unitive Ways are only open to those who have endured the Purgative. It is strikingly paralleled in Teilhard de Chardin who writes:

> *Nemo dat quod non habet*. No sweet-smelling smoke without incense. No sacrifice without a victim. How would man give himself to God if he did not exist? What possession could he transfigure by his detachment if his hands were empty?
>
> . . . .
>
> Your essential duty and desire is to be united with God. But in order to be united, you must first of all *be*--be yourself as completely as possible. And so you must develop yourself and take possession of the world *in order to be*.

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[14] Translation: Unless maturity and a true personality are attained and the pains of individuation endured, there is nothing human to offer.

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> Once this has been accomplished, then is the time to think about renunciation; then is the time to accept diminishment for the sake of being in another. Such is the sole and twofold precept of complete Christian asceticism.(The Divine Milieu, pages 95, 96).

This ripened and final statement in Hesse's last novel of his conception of perfect humanization, whatever the difficulty in getting any precision in its definition, is as close to the ideal of sanctity and perfection proposed by the Christian authorities on the matter, the mystics and spiritual writers, as may rationally be expected from 1) one not explicitly committed to Christian teaching, especially that on grace and 2) from a writer of fiction who presents these realities to us in fictitious characters rather than in propositions.

In view of Hesse's debt to Chinese Taoist thought it should be recalled too how close all this comes to that tradition. The Taoist conception of wu wei, it was remarked earlier in the section on Siddhartha, denotes "a precious suppleness, simplicity, and freedom that flows from us, or rather through us, when our private egos and conscious efforts yield to a power not their own. . . ."[15] Chuang Tzu confirms this:

> Contentment and well-being at once become possible the moment you cease to act with them in view, and if you practice non-doing (wu wei), you will have both happiness and well-being.[16]

B. Persisting and Final Beliefs of the Novelist

From all the analysis that has preceded this point it should be possible to list briefly a set of convictions or beliefs--Hesse would certainly object to a stronger word--that may be termed abiding in the corpus of these novels. If he had been a systematic philosopher or theologian they could be termed his fundamental principles. Although Hesse is not here to ratify this brief catalog, the intention is to present what seem to have been cherished and durable beliefs of his about man's humanization drawn from the novels. This does not aim, therefore, to be the present writer's evaluation. Enough has been written of Hesse's recurring efforts to solve the question of the self's destiny in existence to realize that not every line he ever wrote on the subject was valued by him from that moment on as a lasting contribution. Most obvious in this regard must be Demian and its superman ethos. Little in the later writings would confirm that this remained his ideal. Devotees of Hesse need to be asked, consequently, "which" Hesse they so much admire. What follows, it is hoped, are convictions that Hesse advanced, during any time in his literary history, but which have survived further experiments and his constant quest to become part of the "profession of faith" of this "devout believer."

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[15] Huston Smith, The Religions of Man, pp. 189, 190.

[16] Thomas Merton, The Way of Chuang Tzu (New York: New Directions, 1965), p. 101.

The six points of this "creed" of Hesse's are: 1) the flawed nature of life; 2) fate is one's nature and it is to be willed; 3) there is no end to the possible configurations in one's personal life; 4) the desirability of some great synthesis of all opposites; 5) a serene detachment is the ideal posture toward life; 6) also essential to a true human being is an attitude of loving service though Hesse remains committed more to the individual than to community.

1) Life is flawed

Fundamental to the striving of the novels' protagonists is Hesse's certainty about the basically flawed nature of reality. Were it not for this the constant quest for harmony, reconciliation would be incomprehensible. Life is guilty, Steppenwolf says, indicting all of reality. In common with a number of religious traditions Hesse sees the flaw or fault to be the separation of elements that belong together, of men from men, male from female, man from the All, etc. Hesse, in fact, carries the note of guilt furtherthan much of Christianity would in faulting duality itself:

> All existence seemed to be based on duality, on contrast. Either one was a man or one was a woman. . . . One always had to pay for the one with the loss of the other. . . . . But the split ran through his entire creation. . . . Was this perhaps the seed of the enemy, of original sin? (Narcissus and Goldmund, pages 248, 249).

The hunger, so often voiced, for a crowning reunion of all opposites is founded in the recognition of strife, duality, severance and separation.

2) One's fate is to be willed

Once it is discovered fairly early in the quest that fate is not just a set of constraining external circumstances and forces, fate or destiny is recognized as that individual nature or temperament which is given to each in his own psychosomatic complexion. It is to be searched out, known and willed as the nearly infallible guide it is. Knowing this temperament or fate is, in large part, a matter of accepting the dominance of Geist or Natur--to use the simplification which Hesse is quite unable to truly exorcise. The supposed dominance of one or the other is no simple path to fulfilling one's destiny since their inevitable intertwining leaves one with the task of knowing the self and making decisions. Once decisions and choices are made there is an external element in destiny too: one's choice may open one to further demands from without, from institutions and persons.

3) Any one moment may be transcended

Knecht's poem "Steps" could easily provide a nearly comprehensive motto for the total quest. However it is put, an ineradicable article of Hesse's faith is his conviction that one must be prepared at any moment to move on to a new pattern in his spiritual life. The other "persisting and final beliefs" listed here are chosen for their apparent compatibility--in the Hessean context--with this seemingly all-destroying principle. Even this principle which could be called the principle of the relativity of every spiritual achievement must be qualified itself as relative insofar as it coexists in Hesse with these other convictions.

Like the Indian belief in transmigration of souls--with which it has some kinship--this is an assumption, a certainty, not itself provable. It is rooted in another implicit conviction, the richness and inexhaustibility of the human self; no one constellation of its powers, no one vocation or mode of life, no one personality even, can exhaust its potential. There is always place for new experiments and experience which may lead to a new mode of life. All is "perpetual becoming" like the river in Siddhartha; all is like music, notes, melodies, rhythm, all ever moving forward, whether up or down, still always changing and moving. Life's elements are susceptible of continually new relationships and arrangements like chess pieces (Steppenwolf).

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Experiments and experience, such as Hesse's books detail for us, are the means to be employed in the search for new, more satisfying harmonizations of personal and worldly disparities.

> A magic dwells in each beginning and protecting us it tells us how to live.

Even the serenity of the Music Master could be a relative state of rest:

> Maybe death's hour too will send us out new-born toward undreamed-of lands, maybe life's call to us will never find an end. . . . (Magister Ludi, page 396).

4) The reconciliation of opposites

One of the most positive drives impelling Hesse and his fictional creations is that for some surpassing harmony and reconciliation of all opposites in the self and all or reality, a transcending of dichotomies. This surfaces for the first time most clearly in Demian and ever after is well nigh an obsession. A variety of images symbolize this ultimate synthesis: The Universal Mother, the hermaphrodite, the Gnostic god Abraxas, works of art and music and the Bead Game. Protagonists from Sinclair to Siddhartha, Goldmund and Knecht, all see their fulfillment or realization as requiring some resolution of the scores of dualities that define human life. And the resolution must be personal, within the self, and also more objective, some satisfactory union of the polarities of the world.

Hesse's faith in such a synthesis accounts in large part for the diverse forms of union he envisions and evaluates in the course of his quest. Hesse's other selves, from Goldmund to Knecht, are ready to seek this reunion of all in undifferentiated nature or the unconscious

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or in some superior attainment open only to Geist or granted only by some other power.

Some such union serves, to put it another way, two purposes: it overcomes the evil, the split, that marks reality and it joins the self to reality in a way that assuages its desire for total love and union.

5) Serene detachment

From Siddhartha on and, even rather aggressively in Demian, through Magister Ludi there is a groping for a spiritual posture which has been termed in these pages detachment or serenity. Such a disposition of the soul has close relations to the subject immediately above and to the variety of solutions offered by Hesse to the problem of the self. And the readiness to change, mentioned earlier, requires the qualities being discussed here, a relaxed possession of any one spiritual attitude. As with the sharing in some reconciliation of dichotomies, detachment is really a sharing in a divine or super-human manner of seeing reality. Siddhartha achieves some of this once he has taken on some of the gentle adaptability of the river and learned his oneness with all of nature. Harry Haller is introduced to detachment by "The Immortals" who attempt to teach him to teach him to take himself less seriously and to see self and evil with some humor. Both "The Immortals" and the Music Master offer the music of the great composers as a sublime actualization of the serenity and detachment they share.

The same virtues are endorsed when Mozart speaks of life as a joke or Leo of it as a game. From the truly super-human self-

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consciousness and self-creation urged in Demian to the self-surrender of the later works the ability to see life serenely as a game is part of the real achievement of Hesse's quest. Needless to say, from the context of the novels, it is plain that describing life as a game is not meant to denigrate its seriousness any more than the recommendation of a humorous view of the self is meant to ridicule it or life. Both humor and the idea of the game are humanistic approaches to a kind of detachment surely not unrecognizable to a John of the Cross or to the Taoists.

6) Service

One must take seriously Hesse's contention that he is primarily one of those whom he defines as the "devout believers" and further his specification that they are easily inclined to quietism and "navel-gazing" (zu Quietismus und Nabelbeschauung, "Ein Stückchen Theologie," page 744). Hesse's undeniably introspective preoccupation, his abiding concern about self, leaves him congenitally unable to be enthusiastic about involvement and community. Reference to the wider world comes into Demian most awkwardly in the last pages; Siddhartha's social and sansaric involvement lead to the life of a meditative ferryman; Hesse's strong attraction is for Goldmund, the footloose individual never permanently bound to any institution or society; Knecht leaves his involvement in an important social and cultural institution to be a boy's tutor. Intense love for individuals is congenial to him but involvement which assuredly means some kind of working association with groups is a strain for him and his literary creations.

His characters do indeed fall in love and Hesse is among the prophets of the present-day youth movement partly for treating heterosexual and homosexual loves (the terms here are used for brevity and convenience without all their sexual freight) on an equal plane. His male characters display affection as easily as heterosexual couples. And there are plainly examples of *loving* service even before *Journey to the East*: Peter Camenzind's relation to Boppi; Siddhartha's love for his son and his work as ferryman. *Journey to the East* celebrates the loving service of Leo from whom H. H. should learn. Finally *Magister Ludi*, albeit with aforementioned ambiguity, continues the laud of service. Though *Journey to the East* and *Magister Ludi* probably more consciously seek to commend service, *Peter Camenzind* and *Siddhartha* probably offer more believable exemplification of it. Nevertheless, it must be said that with some consistency the author tries to put forth service as a fundamental good capable of forming a good man. These are all attempts at some kind of *involvement* and cannot be ignored; hence the listing here of this ideal of service for others as one of the persistent traits of Hesse's thought.

Possibly the difficulty, by now familiar to the reader, with service in Hesse is due to the common tendency to presume it means some kind of loving care of and attendance on others. Dasa's service of the yogi is this, of course, but probably even more it is a service with the yogi of Brahman; similarly Turu's service can be seen as to the spirit and Knecht's service during much of his life is similarly comprehensible. Both *Journey to the East* and "Ein Stückchen Theologie" hint that service is to be understood primarily as *the opposite*

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attitude from that of one who wields authority or power. Contrasting the "rational mind" and the "devout believer," in parallel columns, in his little essay on theology, Hesse says the former believes that the earth is delivered to man for his exploitation; the "devout believer" believes that man has a service role or task in the world. The meaning being suggested by the contrast is really nearer to *reverence* and *respect* than to loving service of others. If such a meaning is Hesse's elsewhere, e.g., in *Magister Ludi*, then it is wrong to expect a stronger accent on the care and good of others. The ambiguity remains. There is enough evidence to say that Hesse was acclaiming loving service of others, the deeds of love, and to include this as an abiding part of his creed; there is enough doubt about the meaning of service to leave one with some hesitation.

III. The Positive Insights and Deficiencies of Hermann Hesse's Theology

A. Positive Insights

"Positive Insights" is perhaps not an ideal designation for this positive evaluation of Hesse's contributions to a theology of the spiritual life or of human personal development. Insight has for some too much of the character of a rather light, almost fortuitous, grasp of a matter. Hesse's insights are the result of a laborious straining and conscientious striving over decades to comprehend and determine how to live, how to best realize the potential of the ever-present self. Further, by insight here is not meant the attainment of some unheard-of novelty or the perception of something missed by all the other wise men of mankind. Insight here indicates a serious truth about reality or an apprehension of the realities of man's

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development gained by Hesse in a very personal, individual way, dependent certainly on his background and a variety of traditions, but not consciously explicating any one system or creed. "Positive achievements" might indicate somewhat the element of personal effort involved but otherwise the words are too redolent of the world of scientific progress and economic success which meant too little to Hesse. "Spiritual Discernment of Hermann Hesse" might also be appropriate though the words are probably musty and archaic to many.

These insights are being evaluated as positive here from the viewpoint of the Christian tradition.

1) The Ideal of Reconciliation of Opposites

This great design, to see all reconciled, presupposes what has been described elsewhere, the problem of life's dichotomies and dualities. To overcome these is a great part of the fervent and strenuous searching of Hesse's protagonists. Much contemporary literature, theological, psychological and fictional, gives the name estrangement to this state of separation. Modern thought in coming to this under the impact of existentialism is recovering an essential of the Christian view of man's enmeshment in evil.[17] He is separated from others, from God and divided within himself. A well-known representative of theological existentialism, Paul Tilich, shows the aptitude of this term, estrangement, for what the Bible describes as sin and evil:

> Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings, and from himself. . . . Estrangement is not a

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[17] See Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite, p. 12.

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> biblical term but is implied in most of the biblical descriptions of man's predicament. It is implied in the symbols of the expulsion from paradise, in the hostility between man and nature, in the deadly hostility of brother against brother, in the estrangement of nation from nation through the confusion of language. . . .[18]

Hesse's vision of man as struggling with and in hosts of unresolved dichotomies and polarities seems a close equivalent of estrangement and the biblical description. (His rather complete omission of the moral aspect will come in for discussion in the final section.)

The positive side of this matter is what concerns us here--Hesse's recognition that man's most sublime and important quest is to heal the separations, to recover unity, to reconcile opposites. Despite the romantic and Hegelian, even Gnostic, freight of this last expression, it has a long tradition in the Christian West stemming from Aristotle.[19] The details of Hesse's near-obsession with this, need not be rehearsed here. It is a mark of Hesse's essential soundness and insight that he so constantly puts before his readers the goal of unity and over and over again makes new attempts to find that unity within himself and between self and the rest of reality. Both Indian and Judaeo-Christian religions agree, whatever their other serious differences, on a search for some reconciliation of warring forces, of created elements now in a state of separation not willed by the creator. Tillich's term for this, "the quest for unambiguous life" is apt for Hesse's exploration.[20] Whatever earlier impatience and anguish Hesse and his

[18] Systematic Theology (New York: University of Chicago Press/ Harper and Row, 1967), II, pp. 43, 44.

[19] See D'Arcy, The Mind and Heart of Love, pp. 140 ff and 198 ff.

[20] Systematic Theology, III, pp. 107 ff.

fictional figures expressed over this separation, the final stance views the actuality with more serenity while not surrendering the ideal.

In the light of Hesse's near or quasi-mystical solutions to the problem of the self, it is worth noting that the search for unity, beyond being religious, is also essentially mystical. Evelyn Underhill remarks that the mystics return again and again to the idea of unity "as a relief from the 'heresy of multiplicity' by which they are oppressed" (Mysticism, page 107). What Hesse's troubled souls are seeking is also known to mysticism as the "recovery of paradise," a state where ancient animosities and usual divisions are overcome (See Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite, pages 116 ff). A hero of Hesse's earlier days, St. Francis of Assisi, embodies this state of oneness with nature. In his sanctity and that of the saints generally are illustrated the two components of this ultimate reunion: 1) a reuniting of the whole personality, an integration of all its forces and 2) a harmonious and reverent relation with all of nature including its author. The Hessean effort at personal integration, unity within the self, has been made sufficiently clear. His concern about this other unity, with nature, should not be forgotten. Hesse's "devout believer," obviously not only his predilection but his ideal, feels at home with nature in contrast to the "rational mind" which looks on it exclusively from a utilitarian viewpoint. Siddhartha particularly illustrates the Taoist awareness of man's participation in nature and the desirability of recovering this sense as a part of ultimate peace and serenity.

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2) New beginnings

At its most extreme this persuasion of Hesse's, that no one form of self-realization is taken as final, could be utilized as a rationale for a sort of spiritual drifting. It is not without ambiguity; the serenity of Magister Ludi is certainly presented as some sort of end, but at the same time the suggestion is made that even this might have to be "transcended." At its best Hesse's injunction to continually move on is a reminder of the relativity of every human achievement, that no form of self-realization, no apparent wholeness, should pride itself on its finality. All this may be understood as a rather psychological restatement of Jesus' teaching that, even after doing all that is asked of them, men should consider themselves worthless servants. The humbling note, to be sure, is not prominent in Hesse but there is a constantly growing awareness, evident already in Rosshalde, of the tentativeness of personality resolutions. Siddhartha, of course, illustrates the progress of a spiritual seeker going from "spirituality" to "spirituality." Steppenwolf suggests that the author is so taken with the notion of really new and disparate realizations of one self in one lifetime that he is led to expect a resiliency of personality, difficult not only for poor Harry Haller, but for any poor man as well. As an outside possibility he hints at Hindu reincarnation as a solution. The persisting value of this belief about new beginnings is clear from the life and actions of Knecht in Magister Ludi and the Magister's poem, "Steps," speculates that new forms and levels might be expected even beyond death.

All this is suggestive of Romantic Irony and there is the real

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likelihood that the concept is a blending of Romantic Irony, Eastern religious beliefs and Christian teaching about the need of being reborn again. Hesse's views, and this was pointed out in Siddhartha, are definitely compatible with the more dynamic view of Christian life where it is seen as a constant and progressive dying to self and being reborn patterned after the death and rising of Jesus. From John the Baptist to the present the disciple of Christ is advised constantly to remake his mind and heart.

A hesitation may be voiced here about a kind of practical implementation of Hesse's advice which easily suggests iself to the reader of Siddhartha or Magister Ludi. To understand this maxim of Hesse's as an invitation to pull up stakes and begin a new vocation once there has been a certain level of achievement in an earlier position could easily invite difficulties in a world where family and professional forms make conflicting demands. Yet there is some evidence that many of Hesse's younger devotees find this footloose quality one of the great charms of Hesse and they are quite willing to share and implement Goldmund's disdain for the settled, bourgeois life of the householder and storekeeper. It seems quite clear that Hesse's own invitation to the exhilaration of new beginnings is meant preeminently to be applied in the matter of spiritual and personality development.

Hesse's theory of new beginnings is a rather practical and spiritual parallel to Paul Tillich's more theological Protestant Principle.[21]

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[21] Systematic Theology, I, p. 227.

As Tillich warns against the absolutizing of anything human over against God, Hesse warns against any absolutizing of a finite and temporal realization of self. Again, reference to the mystics is helpful: the lives of the giants of mysticism, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, are largely a series of calls to higher spiritual levels allowing no final resting this side of the grave. It would seem that God himself expects a malleability in his saints comparable to what Hesse asked of Harry Haller. The theory of new beginnings plainly puts Hesse among those spiritual masters who teach a dynamic spirituality of constantly new expectation over against a static, legalistic or moralistic form which, in effect, promises some kind of realization as the unfailing result of the observance of a set of practices and rules. Hesse's dynamic theory is more cognizant of the irreducibility of human behavior to formula or pattern. Hesse and Jung would concur in giving primacy to process over pattern:

> The serious problems of life, however, are never fully solved. If it should for once appear that they are, this is the sign that something has been lost. The meaning and design of a problem seem not to lie in its solution, but in our working at it incessantly.[22]

3) The necessity of being and finding one's self

This particular insight of Hesse's at first reading seems more fitting as a title for the whole Hesse quest than for one of his principles; secondly, in view of all that has been said on the subject it is at least ambiguous. First, the title is broadly coterminous with the pursuit outlined in this study but as used here it refers to the building-up of some initial interest or desire for the quest; this, of course, is where so many young people find Hesse eminently encouraging in a world where such concern may be denigrated as petty or antisocial.

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[22] C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1933), p. 103.

And "being one's self" or "finding one's self" *is* ambiguous. It has two basic meanings: it may mean the final result of a strenuous process of self-knowledge and self-education; or, it may mean a more ultimate realization, bringing to realization of the self, such as the mystics speak of and which is often understood more in the nature of a gift than a conquest. Both are intended here since, according to Hesse, ordinarily a man intent on humanization cannot dispense with active effort *or* with a willingness to receive or be acted upon by another power; both have their place.[23] To quote again the letter given on page 397:

> The inmost urge of youth is to take oneself seriously; the urge of old age is to be able to sacrifice oneself . . . the yearning, the duty of youth is *development*; the calling of maturity is to *abandon* and *surrender* oneself . . . (Unseld, p. 13). (Italics mine.)

Obviously, from what has been seen, the *Demian* (or Samkhya-Yoga) ideal is not the last word. Hesse's ultimate view is a quite different ideal, exhibited most positively in *Magister Ludi*.

Implicit in Hesse's whole undertaking is the conviction, confirmed by experience, that one must demonstrate some seriousness about self-realization, humanization, about the life of the spirit, or the "formula" for it, wherever it is to be found, will never

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[23] Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, p. 74.

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be gained nor recognized. This is plainly compatible with traditional Christian practice which--whatever theological views about the relation of grace and man's activity may be in its background--is in great part concerned to inspire the Christian to want, desire, even work for his salvation or sanctity. These are the logical equivalents of what is here termed self-realization. Undoubtedly Hesse's stress on or allowance for so much place to man's effort is more easily reconciled with religions with a strong mystical strain such as the Eastern religions and Catholicism. Very particularly, Hesse even recommends the ordinary means: meditation and spiritual discipline. No matter from what source it is to be expected, Hesse is saying, self-realization will not come about apart from the individual's concern for, or at least openness to, self-discovery and the expansion of his personality. There is a danger here, of course, which R. C. Zaehner pinpoints--in a somewhat more specifically religious context:

> This cultivation of the eternal 'self' is no more sinful in Christianity than it is in Hinduism, for by discovering the image of God within him, a man may be spurred on to seek God himself, or, as Junayd would have it, God himself may intervene and smash the vessel of self-contemplation that the eyes may be opened to God. The danger of this method, however, is that the mystic may stop halfway, mistaking his own soul for the living God.[24]

The man intent of self-realization might take a plateau of development as his final resting-place. In the case of Goldmund the hero's thirst for reunion with the Great Mother, a symbol of the unconscious, was leading him prematurely, and in the wrong direction, to find his end.

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[24] Matter and Spirit (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), p. 128.

The important point is that Hesse did not stop at this "realization" in Narcissus and Goldmund but went on to Magister Ludi. He continued on, faithful to his own theory, to the other task, that of self-abandonment (Entwerden) as more ultimate. True, in the unreligious atmosphere of Castalia this is not a God-given gift; he stresses only the necessary element of passivity and, in the quotation referred to above, a power that is over us. In the context of Hesse's theology it is the most that is to be expected. The similarity of the fulfillment mirrored in the Music Master to that of the mystics has been noted. Thomas Merton very clearly speaks of the dangers which Zaehner notes but his words about the ultimate "realization" of the self evoke for the reader this same image of the Music Master:

> . . . in all these higher religious traditions the path to transcendent realization is a path of ascetic self-emptying and 'self-naughting' and not at all a path of self-affirmation, of self-fulfillment, or of 'perfect attainment.' This is why it is felt necessary by these traditions to speak in strong negative terms about what happens to the ego-subject, which instead of being 'realized' in its own limited selfhood is spoken of rather as simply vanishing out of the picture altogether. The reason for this is not that the person loses his metaphysical or even physical status, or regresses into non-identity, but rather that his real status is quite other than what appears empirically to us to be his status.
>
> . . . .
>
> To cling too tenaciously to the 'self' and its own fulfillment would guarantee that there would be no fulfillment at all. (Zen and the Birds of Appetite, pages 76, 77).

If the enthusiastic followers Hesse has among the young and their interest in him are significant, he truly is contributing to an intensification of devotion to the most fundamental of all arts and sciences, that of the spiritual life. Young would-be mystics are, of course, in danger of accepting a pseudo-realization or a premature one such as has been discussed here, but, on the other hand, with the help of a mentor like Hesse they are encouraged to avoid a cheap kind of self-emptying which consists in allowing the self to be alienated, absorbed into or lost in the jungle of technical-scientific society. Theodore Roszak writes of the "counter-culture," embracing many a Hesse enthusiast, and its rebellion against the "myth of objective consciousness," the arbitrary construct which has made science and technology the all-dominating forces in our culture.[25] The "counter culture's" priorities are Hessean: "What is of supreme importance is that each of us should become a person. . . ;" it would subordinate the question "'how shall we know?'" to the more vital question "'how shall we live?'" (Roszak, pages 233, 235). Analyses such as Roszak's and the popularity of Hesse give some hope that the life of the spirit may be retrieved from that limbo where it is regarded as:

> (1) a lunatic fringe best left to artists and marginal visionaries; (2) an historical boneyard for antiquarian scholarship; (3) a highly specialized adjunct of professional anthropology; (4) an antiquated vocabulary still used by the clergy. . . . (Roszak, page 146).

4) "Beyond good and evil"

For congenital moralists who must see every struggle and every age under a moral modality, to commend Hesse for a more aesthetic and religious than moral outlook sounds, at the minimum, risky and, at the most, gravely destructive or irresponsible; it is only contributing to the general decay of moral standards. Yet, while the moralism of puritanism may more and more be in retreat if not collapse at present, it is often replaced by a secularized ethic which still leaves moralism triumphant and religion submerged. What is being stressed here is the same as the earlier identification of Hesse's thought as aesthetic over against moralistic, emphasizing the goal, personal spiritual development, rather than the means seen as moral conduct. Put most simply: religion aims at a close relationship with the Absolute; morality aims at behavior conformed to some standard. This fourth insight is little more than an extension of the third: if the third is understood as Hesse's decided preference for being (someone) over having (something) as in this acquisitive age, then the present insight is lauded for attention to the harmonious goal rather than to moralistic prescriptions.

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[25] The Making of a Counter Culture, p. 215.

Hesse's 'religion' may, of course, be faulted for its anthropocentric character--that is to be considered in the final section--but, within its limitations, it is remarkable and commendable, if the mystics and great masters of the spiritual life are any guide, for just this: that it is more religious than moral. Baron von Hügel treats the matter in his The Mystical Element of Religion where he is at pains to establish the non-identity of religion and morality. One of his arguments for this is pertinent here:

> The fact is that Religion ever insists, even where it but seems to be teaching certain moral rules and motives as appropriate to this visible world of ours, upon presenting

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> them in the setting of a fuller, deeper world than that immediately required as the field of action and as the justification of ordinary morality.[26]

The tribute being given Hesse here is a tribute to Hesse's like concern for the more basic, even ontological, setting and development of the self which is ultimately the source of either good or evil. His characters' pursuit of union with the absolute or some other ultimate form of self-realization is a religious, even mystical, matter.

From another viewpoint, a more psychological one, Hesse is envisioning and presenting to his readers the whole, the process and end result of the spiritual life, a complete ideal of a developed, realized personality rather than a code of ethics, so easily regarded as an end in itself. Again, critics of the young will say that the latter need moral teaching with no quibbling as an antidote to their supposed immorality. Whatever merit this insistence may have, it is singularly uninspiring compared to Hesse's invitation to full personality. The more profound tradition of Western spirituality has likewise always regarded the cultivation or enhancement of an authentic spiritual life as a superior source for moral behavior. What Hesse puts forward and awakens is an essentially religious aspiration. Von Hügel's evaluation of Nietzsche is all the more apposite when applied to Hesse who lacked Nietzsche's strident negativities: his "thirst for a higher and deeper world" is "essentially religious" (The Mystical Element of Religion, II, page 274).

[26] (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1961), II, p. 274.

Finally it is notable how like the stance of Chuang Tzu, whom he admired, is Hesse's own:

> The secret of the way proposed by Chuang Tzu is therefore not the accumulation of virtue and merit taught by Ju (Confucian philosophy--author's note), but *wu wei*, the non-doing, or non-action, which is not intent upon results and is not concerned with consciously laid plans or deliberately organized endeavors: 'My greatest happiness consists precisely in doing nothing whatever that is calculated to obtain happiness. . . .' . . . If one is in harmony with Tao--the cosmic Tao, 'Great Tao'--the answer will make itself clear when the time comes to act, for then one will act not according to the human and self-conscious mode of deliberation, but according to the divine and spontaneous mode of *wu wei*, which is the mode of action of Tao itself, and is therefore the source of all good (Merton, *The Way of Chuang Tzu*, page 24).

5) Detachment and serenity

Detachment and serenity, not unusual goals in any spiritual quest, are significant in Hesse's work largely because of the values and attitudes they oppose. In themselves these ideals, especially prominent in *Siddhartha*, *Steppenwolf*, *Journey to the East* and *Magister Ludi*, signify a light (not frivolous), gay, carefree tranquillity coupled with a rather sublime gift of valuing reality and events from a godlike point of view. Detachment, particularly, is a traditional term in spirituality and often bears a distinctly negative note of a wrenching of self and heart from attachment to various goods. Hesse's contribution here is the accentuation of the joyous, unencumbered freedom for which the negative side should prepare the person.

One may surmise that one of the attractive features of Hesse to a generation intent on "hanging loose" is the nuance he gives these terms: detachment and serenity. In his work they are opposed to the pompous, self-important, deadly earnest world of business, science and

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technology, of reason and action. They are at variance with the world of the railway, common sense and useful work, the world "deluded by money, number and time" (*Journey to the East*, pages 13, 19).

Music, humor and the view of life as a game might almost be regarded as weapons in Hesse's writing against over-seriousness, an over-valuing of "the adult world." Music, personified in the delicacy and strength of Mozart or in the Music Master's transparent personality, exhibits this serenity and proper valuing of things. Humor with the essential implication that a man must not take himself too seriously, is a help to that cessation of all concern about self and becoming. And life, "when it is beautiful and happy," is a game instead of a duty, battleground or prison (*Journey to the East*, page 72).

What is intended or hoped for in detachment and serenity is a kind of recovery of childhood on an adult level such as the Gospel enjoins. The young who find this confirmed in Hesse certainly have a profoundly right insight which should not be despised by the bourgeoisie who have settled for less. Paul Goodman has "caught on among the young," Roszak tell us, and quotes him on the content of this childhood:

> *The childish feelings are important* Goodman tells us, and puts the observation in italics, *not as a past that must be undone, but as some of the most beautiful powers of adult life that must be recovered: spontaneity, imagination, directness of awareness and manipulation*. . . . 'Maturity,' precisely among those who claim to be concerned with 'free personality,' is conceived in the interest of an unnecessarily tight adjustment to a dubiously valuable workaday society, regimented to pay its debts and duties (Roszak, page 198 quoting *Gestalt Therapy*, page 297).

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Hesse's perception deserves to be respected and emulated. The puritanical sobriety of the world of finance, science, academia, "the joyless, rapacious and egomaniacal order of our technological society" (Roszak, page 137), need to be dethroned and rejected in the name of humanity and the life of the spirit. Religion and religious people, i.e., those committed to institutionalized religions, do true religion a disservice by their adaptation to this world of "money, number and time." The young need to be encouraged in their detachment from this seriousness about the wrong matters lest they become like those Hesse laments in *Journey to the East*:

> Once in their youth the light shone for them; they saw the light and followed the star, but then came reason and the mockery of the world; then came faint-heartedness and apparent failure; then came weariness and disillusionment, and so they lost their way again, they became blind again (pages 21, 22).

B. Deficiencies

From a Christian viewpoint there are some serious limitations in Hesse's personally-developed theology. Two that seem to have fairly extensive ramifications are considered here: 1) the absence of any notion of a personal God; 2) and, related to this, the lack of any strong, persistent affirmation of the place of love in the life of the spirit, or, more briefly, the ethical inadequacy of Hesse's way. It should be apparent from what has preceded that Hesse's theology, as the personal effort of an individual apart from attachment to any one specific tradition, is most admirable and expressive of a genuinely serious god-seeker. In pointing out deficiencies in this theology it is not simply a matter of criticizing Hesse. Such deficiencies attest to what theology calls the moral necessity of

God's revelation to men, specifically the content of the Judaic and Christian religions. For such revelation to be operative in a theology it must be accepted as such and given some normative value. Hesse, obviously, must have been familiar with the Christian Scriptures from his family background but implicitly rejected Pietism even though an increasing reverence for the Pietist and Christian tradition is observable with the years.

1) The absence of a personal God

a. The only evident and fairly consistent God present in any of the novels is the God who is the origin of all and includes all in himself, called Brahman, his Hindu name, or the All. In the earliest works God is incidental to the many personal problems of the protagonists. Strong reservations are voiced about the apparent limitations of the Biblical God in Demian; he is compared unfavorably to the Gnostic God Abraxas who exhibits greater catholicity: he embraces and blesses good and evil. In Siddhartha Brahman is of considerable significance in Siddhartha's life; he reappears as the All into which the self should be dissolved in Steppenwolf. Goldmund effectively replaces God with the Great Mother while Narcissus is formally committed to the Christian God. Secularized Castalia has no place for God even though the ideal of self-transcendence or self-emptying has a mystical reference. It is almost possible to aver that God is of very little consequence in the novels, but more accurately it should be said that a personal God who encounters men in some sort of situation at least analogous to human relations is missing. Men, at a certain level of spiritual development, may be absorbed by

Brahman or return to a union with Brahman in which the self is truly lost. This God has no face and neither makes demands nor responds to invocations or petitions.

In his theological essay Hesse includes as part of the creed he feels is held universally and, by implication, by himself, the statement:

> . . . daŝz wir uns selbst nicht regieren, sondern regiert werden, daŝz es über unsrem Erkennen einen Gott oder sonst ein 'Es' gibt, dessen Diener wir sind, dem wir uns überlassen dürfen ("Ein Stückchen Theologie," page 737).

"We do not rule ourselves but are ruled; there is beyond our knowledge a God or at least an 'It' whose servants we are and to whom we ought to abandon ourselves." This God or "It," especially if as seems correct the latter reflects Hesse, seems redolent of his rejection of Pietism where, it can be presumed, God was quite personal. The use of "It" may indicate the influence of the rationalism current in his youth. In the same essay, he states that while he considers himself among the "devout believers," he recognizes also in himself some of the traits of "the rational mind." Balancing this, in the frequent evocation of the Great Mother there may be Hesse's desire for a more personal God, a figure of more proximity and warmth than the All. She does, of course, unite in herself the disparities of Kali and is therefore not all love and tenderness and she is unequivocally called "she" and longed for by her devotees in a manner reminiscent of mystics East and West.

The phenomenon of the rejection of a personal God is apparently endemic among intellectuals.[27] The idea that God is a person analogous to the human person and concerned about individuals is generally regarded as unequivocally mythological. To go back no further than Pascal, that apologist for belief whose God was the God of the Patriarchs, "not of the philosophers and scientists," puts succinctly the difficulty as he attempts to counter it:

> You must be a very clever fellow to have arrived at the opinion that man is too small to merit communion with God.[28]

Belief in a personal God who is actually concerned for man and ready to share a personal relationship with him is for many modern minds the "grossest 'anthropomorphism.'"[29] Personality in God means that God has, *mutatis mutandis*, the highest degree and form of what men regard as the superlative character of their existence, a uniqueness founded far deeper than their physical distinction from each other, which allows them to freely relate to other persons. The notion of personality in God, whatever be its difficulties, at least means safeguarding the nature of God against human manipulation and control. The reduction implied in leaving personality out of God seems to mean he becomes a thing, another object of knowledge to be circumscribed by laws deduced from his past behavior and human expectation. To say that God is a person leaves him free to be himself, to act, will and love with the accompanying unpredictability. Possibly, if it is any help, one may say that God must be at least personal so as to share the freedom--in his own manner--predicated of men. "We mean that we meet God in life and history, not as an object, not as a thing, not as an It--to use Buber's pregnant distinction--but as a Thou. . . ."[30]

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[27] See Martin D'Arcy, *The Meeting of Love and Knowledge* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1957), pp. 64-65.

[28] *The Essential Pascal*, ed. Robert W. Gleason, trans. G. F. Pullen (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 134 (number 350 of Pensées).

[29] Will Herberg, *Judaism and Modern Man* (New York, 1951), pages 58-65.

To recognize and preserve the personal character of God undoubtedly requires for mankind as a whole God's revelation of this to men. God's personality is given additional reinforcement for the Christian and additional scandal for the unbeliever by the Incarnation. And the consequent relation of men to God in his Son is of great importance to the mystic quest in Chrstianity, a safeguard against some of the temptations experienced in Hesse's seekers.

b. Negatively, the absence of a personal God means the greatest difficulty, indeed, the impossibility of relating self-realization, final fulfillment, to love. Love, so universally heralded and recognized as the highest good of man, is possible only between living persons. Love is essentially impossible between or toward abstractions or possibilities. The icy atmosphere of "The Immortals" in Steppenwolf is ineluctably necessary and logical. Whereas Dante made his hell icy because of the absence of love, Hesse's "heaven" is chill for the same reason. One cannot deny the presence of love between persons in Hesse's novels but love has no place in man's relationship to the Absolute of these works. The quest for self-realization is envisioned in terms of techniques of meditation concentration and discipline, and intellectual and even emotional permeation by music, for instance, but not in terms of the power Hesse recognized clearly enough in human relations, the power of a great love to transform the self. There may be self-surrender but not self-surrender to another. The highest moment, for instance, in the life of the Music Master is a moment of detachment, self-emptying but with no consequent fulfilling of the self such as men see prefigured in human love.

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[30] Herberg, p. 65.

Instead there is the temptation to allow the self to be really obliterated or stripped of consciousness in an immersion in the All. Or there is the cruder temptation, pictured in Demian, to create, realize and save the self by one's own power with the end result an impossible kind of isolation. There is, further, the temptation, also experimented with, to return the self to its oneness with unconscious and undifferentiated nature. Without God as a person there is no assurance of a union which saves and fulfills man as a person. Evelyn Underhill argues even further that the preservation of personality of God requires de facto the presence and instrumentality of the humanity of Christ:

> In the last resort, the doctrine of the Incarnation is the only safeguard of the mystics against the pantheism to which they always tend. The Unconditioned Absolute, so soon as it alone becomes the object of their contemplation, is apt to be conceived merely as Divine Essence; the idea of Personality evaporates. The union of the soul with God is then thought of in terms of absorption. The distinction between Creator and creature is obliterated and loving communion is at an end (Mysticism, page 120).

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c. Only a love-union of persons can guarantee and bring about that surely more fulfilling realization of the self that Hesse was seeking. Only in such a union do both parties survive union intact, able to recognize and enjoy consciously the bliss of union. And the human party achieves a consequently heightened personality communicated to it by the Other. In explaining his own thought on this Teilhard de Chardin puts it well:

> Our God, . . . pushed to its furthest possible limit the differentiation among the creatures he concentrates within himself. At the peak of their adherence to him, the elect also discover in him the consummation of their individual fulfillment. Christianity alone therefore saves, with the rights of thought, the essential aspiration of all mysticism: to be united (that is, to become the other) while remaining oneself (The Divine Milieu, page 116).

Even within the Indian and Chinese-Japanese traditions so dear to Hesse, there are religions or most important cults where this is realized.[31] If Hesse, like so many Hindus, had gone beyond the monism of Vedanta and early Hindu thought and of much of the East, to the development so well recorded in the Bhagavadgita, he would have encountered a personal union with God. The two most significant and widespread cults of modern India, centered around Vishnu (Krishna) and Shiva, introduce their devotees to a relationship and union of love with God. R. C. Zaehner relates it well to what has been seen in Hesse of the reunion of the self (Atman) with Brahman:

> The older doctrine of the identity of the human soul with brahman is accepted (in the Gita), but the word brahman seems to be used in a different sense. In the passage in which the soul is said to become Brahman, brahman seems to mean little more than a timeless state of existence.

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[31] See Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite, pp. 67 ff.

> Moreover, Krishna, as the incarnation of Vishnu, claims to be higher than Brahman, he is the personal God beyond the Absolute, and must be worshipped as such. Moreover, worship and mystical experience are not incompatible, as they must be in the Vedanta system, for if you *are* God, there can plainly be no point in worshipping yourself; . . . The theology of the Gita changes all this: to realize oneself as Brahman means no more than to realize the eternity of one's soul, to realize that because it has its being outside time it cannot die . . . only so can liberation be won. But once it is won, this is not the end: on the contrary, this represents only the initial stage of purification by which the soul is freed from all the dross of this world and is thereby enabled to enter into communion with *the* Eternal *par excellence* because it is now sufficiently like Him to make such communion possible.[32]

How this state of the soul is to be brought into relation with the personal God, Krishna, is brought out in the last chapter of the *Gita*:

> By giving up self, . . . force, pride, lust, anger, and acquisitiveness, with no thought of 'mine,' at peace, so is a man fitted to realize his eternal essence, to realize himself as brahman. Become eternal, his soul all stilled, he grieves not, nor does he desire. Feeling equanimity towards all creatures, he receives the highest love of me. By his loving devotion he comes to know me, how great I am and who. Then, once he has known me as I am, he forthwith comes to me.
>
> . . . .
>
> Think on me, worship me, sacrifice to me, pay me homage: so shalt thou come to me. I promise thee truly, for I love thee well. Give up all things of the law, turn to me only as thy refuge. I will deliver thee from all evil. Have no care (vv. 53-55; 65, 66).[33]

For a full exposition of Christian teaching on the personal union of God and man nothing is better than M. C. D'Arcy's *Mind and Heart of Love*. E.g.,:

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[32] "Christianity and the World Religions," in Camillus D. Talafous, *Readings in Science and Spirit* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966), p. 199.

[33] Trans. Juan Mascaró (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), pp. 120-121.

> . . . in the mystics' terminology the soul is enraptured and its life is stolen away, and it is in the dark night that the total denuding of self is accomplished. But whereas the primitive impulse was to loss of self, 'for I was flax and he was flames of fire,' in that region where the self meets the Lord of life, there is communion and not death; . . . (page 16).

2) The lack of a strong and persistent affirmation of the place of love in the life of the spirit

Previously Hesse's obvious repudiation of a moralistic stance was welcomed as an indication of genuine religion over against mere ethics. In what follows a qualification of this is made which is not meant to detract from this positive good. Every writer or thinker will betray certain basic orientations which could only be denied at the expense of his integrity. The whole direction of Hesse's work is religious not moral. The reservations expressed here are, it should go without saying, concerning the entire picture of man's humanization that emerges from Hesse's novels, not complaints about Hesse's own character.

a. The theme can be expressed variously: the lack of a strong affirmation of the place of love in the life of the spirit; the ethical inadquacy of Hesse's way taken as a total guide; and Hesse's propensity to individualism in ethical matters.

Baron von Hügel, remarking that religion and morality tend to insist on different virtues as primary--religion on trust, love, heroism, renovation; morality on responsibility, prudence, merit--says that as a result protagonists of either may be defective in the other:

> And hence it is not accidental, although of course not necessary, that we often find men with a keen religious sense but with a defective moral practice or even conception,

> and men with a strong moral sense and a want of religious perception; that mystics, with their keen sense for one element of religion so often seem, and sometimes are, careless of morality proper; . . . (The Mystical Element of Religion, II, page 274).

This much excuse can surely be offered for Hesse's deficiency in the matter.

It has already been intimated that Hesse's concept of God, the impersonality of it, makes a central position for love most unlikely. So in a sense the point here is merely an extension of the previous one about the nature of God. The difficulty with fitting an idea of service as loving attention to the wants of others into Hesse's last novel illustrates the logic of the situation which makes loving service an incongruity or an incidental to the kind of self-emptying being attempted there. The moral notion of un-selfishness is nearly absent. If God is not a person then love for him is, if not out of the question, at least a superfluous effort. Such a God would not initiate love nor respond to it nor expect it of his servitors.

An impersonal God does not provide the motivation for moral action. His or its devotees may truly love other men but the springs of their love must be sought elsewhere than in God. Christian moral action at its highest is required out of imitation of or gratitude to the God who has loved men first. Wm. James, whose conception of God was by no means unduly Christian though theistic, argues the point in an essay "Reflex Action and Theism" that neither a conception of God as an "it" nor as identical with the self is adequate stimulus for men's loyalty and moral energy. A personality in God, he says, is a requirement for man's whole nature if it is to be galvanized into action. However else the divine personality may differ from ours "the two are consanguineous at least in this,--that both have purposes for which they care, and each can hear the other's call."[34]

Related to this is the question of responsibility and its corollaries, guilt or merit. Hesse's view of the primal or all-encompassing sin or evil of the world was seen largely to be identical with the concept of "estrangement." Paul Tillich in the course of his discussion of that term observes that the word cannot simply serve in place of "sin" since the latter term carries the additional and necessary note of "the personal act of turning away from that to which one belongs," a note lacking in "estrangement" (*Systematic Theology*, II, page 46). Apart from a consideration of Tillich's own conception of God--a topic that would take us far afield--his observation raises the question of whether responsibility can be *to* a non-personal being. Assuredly men may feel responsibility for the good use of the earth or, even in a sense, *to* the earth for its preservation from unmitigated exploitation. But the more proper use of the word, being subject to questioning about one's discharge of duties and tasks, seems by its very nature to suppose an inter-personal relationship. In other words, the lack of much real responsibility for behavior--not that Hesse's protagonists do not conduct themselves with probity; many do;--with the meaning of having to render an accounting to someone may easily be another consequence of the absence of a personal God.

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[34] *Essays on Faith and Morals* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1962), p. 122 and pp. 111 ff.

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Personal moral responsibility definitely has a low profile in Hesse's works and the despair he considers a stage in man's development is not ordinarily consequent on any bitter recognition of moral guilt, though this is not entirely absent. Hesse should not, however, be placed among the "redemption-through-sin" novelists of the last century or so. Steppenwolf and Goldmund both despair more over the non-realization of their goals than over past moral failures. In any case, personal moral responsibility does not loom large in the novels. Again, this may be due, and quite legitimately, to revulsion at a too extensively moral evaluation of every facet of life in Pietism.

Objectively, that is, apart from Hesse's own nature and its gifts, the individualistic ethic that manifests itself in his writing is, of itself, not adequate for man living in society. Hesse's personalism is not under criticism here; that is his awesome respect for the uniqueness of the person which is tendered also to other persons than one's self. Further, individualism here does not signify a tendency to ride roughshod over the rights and persons of others in seeking one's own fulfillment. Rather it means the effective, practical omission to a great degree of attention to the necessities of the wider community and world around the self. The single-mindedness with which Hesse pursues the path of self-realization concentrates all his concern and ability on the problems and the development of the person who carries the weight of his interest in a particular novel: Sinclair, Siddhartha, Goldmund or Knecht. Unavoidably this leaves community and society at the periphery or at most as antagonistic

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forces which the self must somehow meet and conquer. Sinclair and Demian may become involved, incongruously, with the war; Siddhartha with the Kindermensch, Steppenwolf with bourgeois society; but the important matter is always the individual self working its way to some surcease despite all these.

Magister Ludi marks the obvious attempt of Hesse to remedy this by a recognition on his part of the value of involvement. But it is a late and, as has been argued, not a totally successful or convincing attempt. Hesse seems to have evinced more real concern about the wider community in essays and topical pieces while never fully integrating such concern in his essentially "private" novels. Immersion in the spirit of Hesse's novels may encourage some in what is called a "cop-out" but only in conjunction with other influences beyond Hesse's control. The positive side of all this is the encouragement Hesse offers to a more contemplative view of the world, to serious concern for the life of the spirit. As Hesse himself plainly realized, one's destiny is written in one's nature and to follow the lead of Schicksal is right. Again, "Mystics, with their keen sense of one element of religion, so often seem, and sometimes are, careless of morality proper. . . ." (Von Hügel, The Mystical Element of Religion, II, page 274).

b. The affirmative nature of Hesse's amoralism has been stressed earlier. In the self-emptied situation he envisions for man at his highest, there is the purity of heart, selflessness that can only know evil at the expense of a reviviscence of self-concern.[35] As St. Paul

[35] Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite, p. 136.

says, "Against such there is no law."

More negatively there is the possibility that immature readers may be emboldened to a premature shedding of moral requirements, a kind of self-deception, by their reading of Hesse. Hesse's congenital failure to do justice to the ethical dimension and his effort to transcend good and evil does not argue that he disdained the basic moral distinctions. What undoubtedly troubles many a reader of more rigid moral education is the implicit invitation they see in Hesse to moral anarchy. *Demian* manifestly aims to shatter bourgeois moral standards in the interest of a new self-creation. Goldmund's erotic adventures are looked on more under the modality of education and experience than as good or evil. *Magister Ludi*, probably the most unobjectionable of the books to the moralist, touches the grave moral problem of the legitimacy of self-enclosed, non-productive intellectual communities like Castalia. To this latter type of "immorality" Hesse is sensitive, but to what moralists and the man-in-the-street usually mean by immorality, matters involving sexual offenses, he is, it is true, fairly indifferent.

In this indifference to moral judgments Hesse is either 1) writing out of a condition where these truly cease to be primary because the self which is aggrandizing itself in evil is so transformed and transcended that is it genuinely established beyond good and evil, insofar as man may reach such a state; 2) or Hesse is writing out of the context of a situation where the self has really reverted to an unconscious pre-moral state. Those who read him as despising morality are either misinterpreting number one above or are drawing

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predictable conclusions from a state wherein men deny their human dignity and revert to something less. To the degree that Hesse's highest thought is identified with the spirit of Taoism he will be liable to the judgment R. C. Zaehner makes of the Taoist experience which he sees as nature mysticism. In this the nature mystic is "concerned with something quite other than the theistic mystic," in fact with Nature which is "neither good nor evil, but beyond and indifferent to both" unlike the theistic God (Mysticism Sacred and Profane, page 109). Lacking a personal God as he does, Hesse could easily be classified with these nature mystics whom Zaehner, in general, regards as on quite another, lesser, level than theistic mystics. Taoism, he says, is:

> indistinguishable from what is usually called nature mysticism; and this represents not an advance in any sense . . . but a slipping back into the comforting embrace of that participation mystique which we have seen to be characteristic of the age of innocence before individual consciousness was born (Matter and Spirit, page 76).

Representative of this mysticism are the Upanishads, authors like Rimbaud, Proust and Hölderlin; it is characterized by a "lofty contempt for conventional morality."

Conceivably Hesse, as was suggested earlier in the instance of Narcissus and Goldmund, is reverting to or longing for a reversion to this pre-conscious state--especially in the Great Mother passages. Elsewhere he seems to be transcending ordinary states of consciousness. Zaehner's interpretation of Taoism is not universal. Thomas Merton is considerably more sympathetic or less reductionist. He holds that, as much as Zen and Taoism, specifically Chuang Tzu, might be equated

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with moral anarchy by some of their shallow followers, both reach a state of apparent moral indifferentism only after tough discipline and observance of severe traditional standards (The Way of Chuang Tzu, pages 16 ff). If Hesse is to be faulted on this count, it can more surely be done to the degree that he offers facile solutions to the problems of the spiritual life and implies that no effort, no demands on self, are necessary. But this surely is not his authentic position: Sinclair struggles and suffers and the end is not easy; Siddhartha is not given his rest apart from rigors and continually new efforts; Steppenwolf is the very picture of a suffering would-be suicide who is only offered very searing and bitter remedies; even Goldmund reaches no simple pact with life; and Magister Ludi offers years of austere discipline leading to self-emptying or self-sacrifice.

Conclusion

If authentic spiritual disciplines such as Zen and the wisdom of India can contribute to the self-deception of faddists, then, as a matter of course, the even more available work of Hesse can be used by reason of its weaker traits as an excuse for immature inaction or bogus self-realization.[36] For Hesse, his fictional questers and all seekers, all travelers to the East, it has always been far otherwise.

[36] They might be humbled by Hesse's observation in "Ein Stückchen Theologie" that the number of men who travel the path of his protagonists is not large; the number who are ever made fully human small, p. 740.

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Hesse shares with great mystics like John of the Cross the sobering conviction that the holiness or wholeness, whatever its ambiguities in Hesse, which is their mutual goal is attained only through a willingness to search and suffer. If he does not commend traditional asceticism, he is at least similarly convinced that the ultimate goal is not attained without some transformation of character. With the mystics and ascetics he feels the conflict of Geist and Natur and the temptation to despair or sloth. Though the words may not answer to the mentality of all seekers, they all experience something akin to Sinclair's and Hesse's plight:

> I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult (Demian, page 80)?

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